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Number Seven

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BRITANNIA and EVE

VOL. 37 No. 6 DECEMBER, 1948

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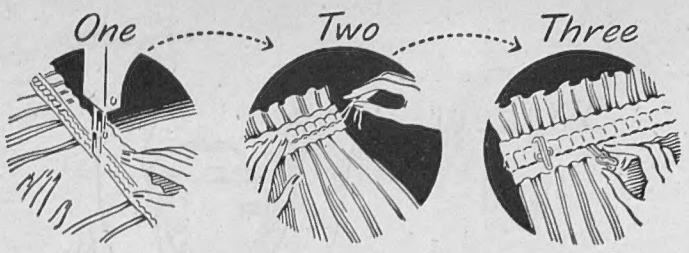

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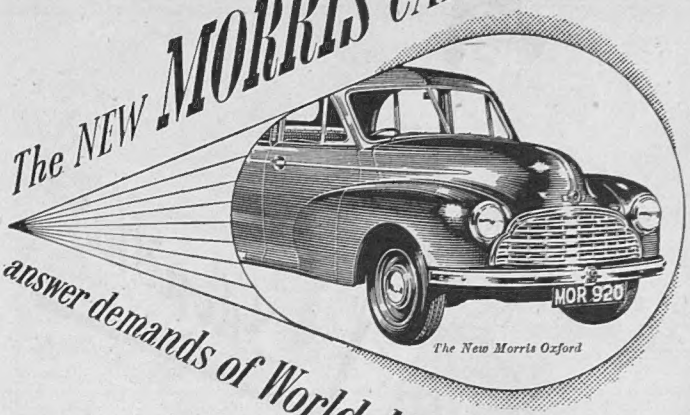

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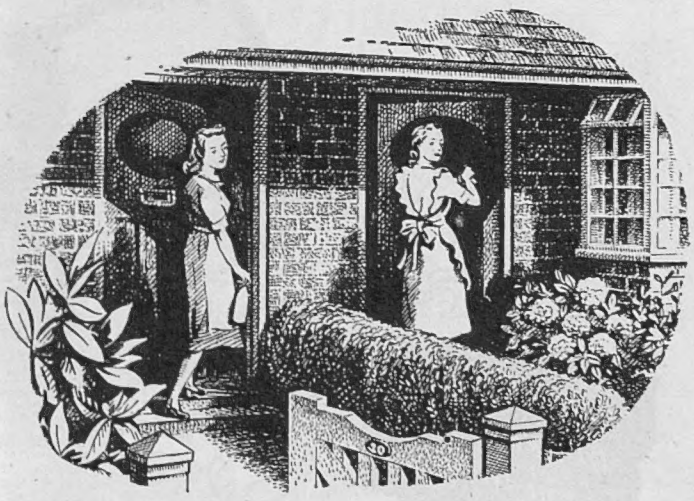

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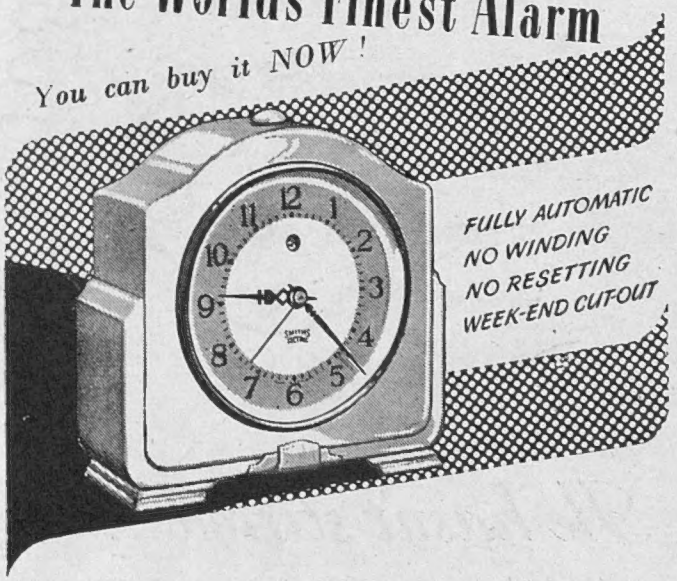

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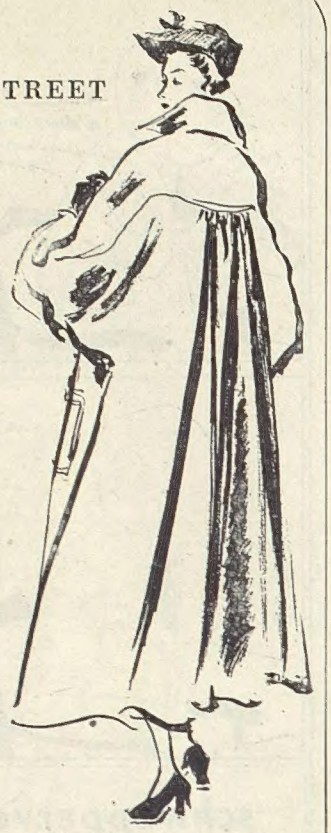

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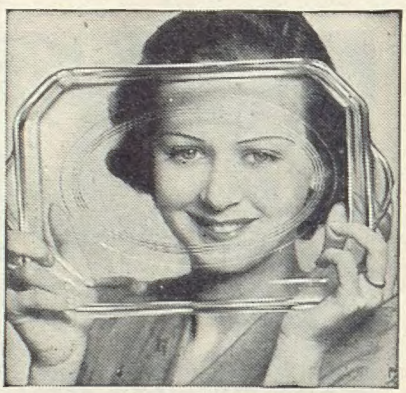

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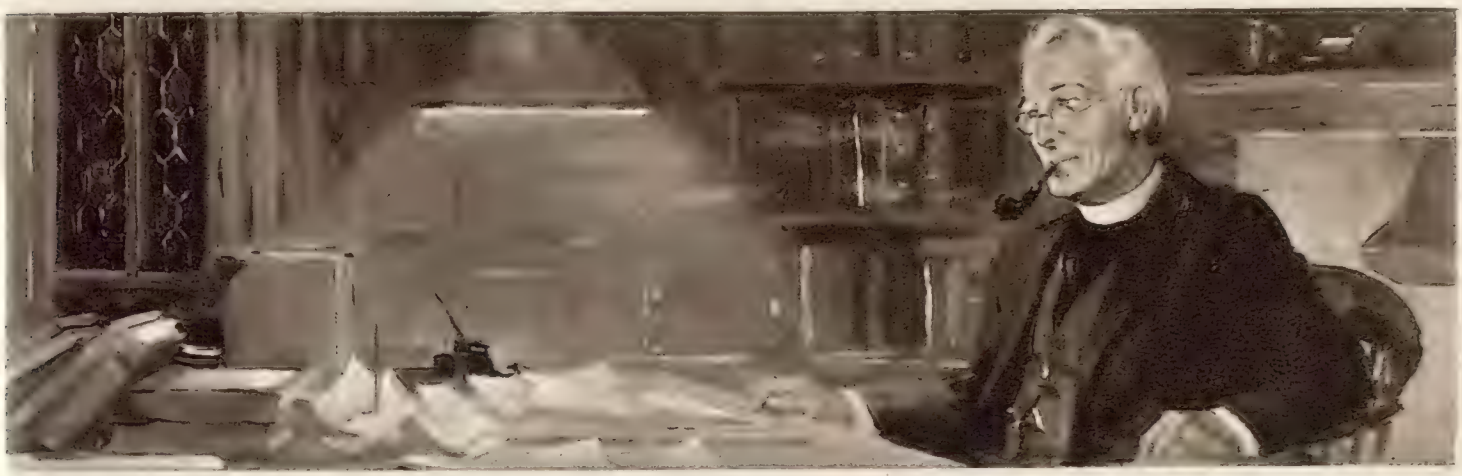


Everywhere in the study, in fact, was the chaos of a scholar, left without a woman to look after him

Three Gifts For Father Christmas

A Short Story by Arthur Grant Morris

THE Rector and his study fitted closely as hand and glove. Even when it was empty the room retained the very shape and imprint of the man's mind, for there remained always the books of theology and philosophy overflowing from the crowded shelves on to the table and on to the leather chairs with broken springs. Now and then a pipe would poke its head out between the pages of a sermon or a treatise on Shakespeare. Everywhere, in fact, was the chaos of a scholar, left without a woman to look after him. For the moment the hand was in the glove. Walter Griffin was sitting by the fire on a cold December night, and suddenly he felt tired, old and very lonely.

This mood he dismissed instantly by an effort of will, as he was not given to self-pity and introspection, and he cast out devils by hard work, pastoral and intellectual, for he belonged to a fast-vanishing race: the genus of the parson-scholar who sets aside the world's prizes and brings a first-rate brain into the service of a slum parish or a remote country village.

Griffin was a tall, lean man, turning grey, and his magnificent breadth of forehead above deep, penetrating eyes, made him look the celebrity that he could have been if he had been more worldly in pressing his claims or pulling strings.

But Griffin never would bow down to Satan to gain the kingdoms of the earth, and so after twenty-five years in the East End of London and another fifteen in the country, he was still an obscure rector, living on about three hundred a year in a house which cried out for six servants and did not get them.

For the Rector never asked or expected a favour, and he had no friends at court.

As a result, while younger men with more flashy attainments caught him up and outstripped him in the race for preferment, Griffin was left among his books to write commentaries which very few people bought, and to preach sermons, the product of intense mental travail, which were completely above the heads of his people.

He knew that and was humble. "I am not a big enough man to have our Lord's gift of profound simplicity."

The village people liked Griffin and respected him, for they knew a real gentleman, but there was a great gulf between them and him which could not be bridged. They did not grasp what he was getting at, so they said "Yes, sir" or "No, sir," and got on with their work.

It had been easier when Mrs. Griffin was alive. She understood cooking and crops and babies. She could walk in the common ways of life, and yet she could also appreciate her husband's translations of Horace's odes or his exegesis of a passage in Romans or Ephesians. A woman in a thousand, she had been charming, clever, well-bred and, in her quiet way, beautiful.

"She goes round picking up the bricks her husband drops," said a neighbouring parson, who was jealous of Griffin, accusing him, as many of the brethren did, of intellectual snobbery.

But Griffin was no snob in any way. Certainly he was no respecter of persons, for he had the exact scholar's dislike of false logic and loose reasoning, and he had, on occasion, corrected the Bishop for questionable theology, which led to a certain coolness.

Without doubt he was not a yes-man or a time-server. God forbid. All the same, he was aware that not many of the local clergy were up his street and it made him unhappy, for inwardly he was a simple soul, craving affection and friendship. He longed for his neighbours to drop in for a smoke, to talk about books and church news, but his one real friend had been his wife, who had been able to meet him almost as an equal intellectually, besides giving him the love and care due to a helpless man, who was pitifully unworldly and unhandy

in practical matters. Always Mary Griffin had dreaded dying before Walter, because she knew that he was a child in many ways, and that he would be at the mercy of tradesmen, cadgers, and such domestic help as he might be able to afford.

Her fears were not unfounded, for during the five years after her death Walter had grown both lonelier and shabbier and poorer, for he gave away clothes and money to people better off than himself, and he had no idea of how to collect any fees due to him. It was much the same with his ration book. He had no help in the garden and very little in the house, so that his suits and boots were usually dirty, whilst the rooms were untidy, the books undusted and the desk littered with papers : a hotch-potch of notes in Hebrew or Greek mixed up with scraps of the Nursing Association accounts, of which he was supposed to be treasurer. That meant cooking the accounts by making up any deficit out of his own pocket. Unscrupulous villagers never paid their subscriptions. They left that to the Rector.

A young man, muffled up, was standing on the steps. He was a stranger to Griffin, but he had an intelligent, sensitive face. "Forgive me calling like this," he said. "But are you Mr. Griffin?"

Mary, with her clear head, had done all such things for him, leaving him free to walk with Plato, Sophocles, Donne and Dryden.

One special little job which she always did at Christmas was to see that the Father Christmas robes and beard were ready for the children's party, clean and patched for Walter to wear in his inevitable rôle.

Griffin remembered that now, and sighed. It was fifteen years since he and Mary had come down from London, looking forward to happy work in the peace of the country. Almost the first thing that Mary did was to realise how the children had been neglected.

"Walter, we must do something for these boys and girls. D'you know they have never had a Christmas party?"

So Walter and Mary had taken the bus into the nearest town and there they had bought a Father Christmas outfit and some little toys. The party was a success, almost a miracle to the children, and ever since then he had been Father Christmas, buying all the gifts himself with individual care : for although he was shy and stiff with children he knew them all.

FOR the past five years he had had to do it all on his own, and the thin, red robe of Father Christmas was getting very worn and the mask was cracked. All the same, it was better to buy nicer toys and to let St. Nicholas be threadbare a little longer.

"Mary would have smartened me up," he thought, as he unpacked the things from a cardboard box, kept in the study cupboard. The presents were laid out and ticketed ; each one had a short individual message written, for Georgie, Kate or John. Griffin put all the things into a sack ready for the next day. There was a fountain-pen for the schoolteacher, Miss Beale, who always proposed the vote of thanks to Father Christmas.

"Now, children, give Father Christmas a big 'thank you.' He has come such a long way to see you, and he must be ever so tired." She had always irritated Griffin, and it had been worse since Mary died. Poor Miss Beale! Such a good churchwoman, and so hopeful! Griffin closed his eyes and prayed for tolerance.

"We educated people," was her line to the Rector, claiming intellectual kinship, which dismayed him.

But at Christmas-time there must be no lack of charity and Griffin never forgot Miss Beale's present. It was all he could do for her . . .

There! Everything was in order for the next day. It was getting dark, so Walter lit the oil lamp, and he began to feel hungry. He could only rely on very spasmodic help in the kitchen, and he rarely tasted a good hot meal.

The days were gone when the study door would open and Mary would be standing there saying, "Supper, dear."

Illustrations by Jack Faulks

That meant something simple but appetising, beautifully served, and afterwards they would sit and read Shakespeare together or talk, if there were no parish function. To-night he had to be content with making himself a cup of tea and finding some dry cheese on the kitchen dresser. Then, after reading from the Greek Testament and saying his prayers, Walter Griffin retired to bed, where he slept like a child.

The great event of the next day was the Children's Party at the Hall.

Miss Beale was in full force, wearing her terrible best frock and sidling up to the Rector as often as possible, determined to be ranked as gentry in the eyes of the village, though they were never deceived.

"And now, Mr. Griffin, shall I ask my little ones to sing their pretty grace?"

"That will be delightful," assented the Rector politely. The small creatures, about a dozen boys and as many girls, stood up to murder their tune in reedy voices, thin and uncertain of the pitch.

Griffin winced, but contrived to look pleased. He was always a little moved by the children, so untouched and unawakened by life, nervous at first, then cramming down buns, shouting and pulling crackers.

The party was being a success, but the climax had yet to come. Miss Beale moved close to the Rector and whispered confidentially in his ear, "As soon as the tables are cleared, Mr. Griffin." He nodded, and slipped unobtrusively to a small room, where the Father Christmas properties were waiting for him, beyond reach of prying infants.

Not beyond Miss Beale.

"You must let me help you, Rector."

The joy of fastening a tape for him and doing up buttons!

"Thank you," he said shortly, "but I expect I can manage."

There was no escape. Pins in her mouth, needle and cotton, to mend the worst holes.

"Oh! You men, you need some looking after."

Griffin grunted.

"Let me have the things afterward, so that I can put them in order."

Griffin almost hated her. The thought of her doing Mary's jobs. "I couldn't possibly bother you," he said. "I know how busy you must be."

"Obstinate," she said, wagging a finger. "But I must slip back now, Rector, or the village people will miss me."

Griffin wanted to bolt home. It was odious being in a sort of innocent conspiracy with Miss Beale; a forced intimacy. But he had to go on with the game, for he loved the children and he tried to imagine that it was Mary who had helped him into his robe and mask, and that it would be Mary who welcomed Father Christmas into the Hall, pretending a delighted astonishment at the miracle.

Letting himself out into the cold darkness he walked round the side of the hall to the main entrance, where he knocked loudly on the door.

From inside Miss Beale cried: "Who 's there? Who 's there? O-o-o, we are so frightened!"

Griffin ground his teeth and knocked again.

"Let me in; it 's Father Christmas!"

"It 's Father Christmas, children. Don't forget what to say."

Then Griffin, sack over his shoulder, stumped into the room, with a fearful assumption of jovial heartiness.

"Hullo! children, hullo! Glad to be back again once more."

"Welcome, Father Christmas!" The older and bolder children started up in sing-song school voices, and the chant trailed away with squeaks and lisps from every corner of the hall.

Miss Beale led Father Christmas to the platform, where he pretended to knock the snow off his boots.

"Very cold in my sleigh. Ugh!"

"So good of you to come, Father Christmas, to such a small place. We oughtn't to expect it every year."

"Now, gather round," said Father Christmas, "and I 'll open my sack. It was hard work finding you all presents this year, my dears. There 's a shortage, even in toy-land."

The children, full of food, jiggled up and down excitedly, huddling close up to Griffin, whilst the parents sat stolidly in chairs, watching to see that their own Tom or Irene was not left out. Once there had been a mistake, which had taken all Mary's tact to remedy.

The distribution began.

"Anne Able."

The tiny creature came up and bobbed to Father Christmas.

"There 's a doll for you, Anne. Be a good girl."

Some of the very small people cried, but others exclaimed, with scorn: "It 's the Rector; I can see 'is trousers."

"S-s-sh," said Miss Beale.

"And now," said Griffin, at the very end, "I have a present for your kind teacher, Miss Beale."

She gave a kind of ecstatic squeal, though she had been waiting for this moment.

"Oh! Father Christmas, you shouldn't. I ought not to take it." She unwrapped her pen and held it up. "Look, children, what Father Christmas has given to me."

None of them was interested, being engrossed in other affairs, toy guns, soldiers, dolls and clockwork motors.

The party had cost Father Christmas more than he earned in a week before the tax was deducted.

WHEN he got home at last he was very tired, but he had succeeded in rescuing his things from the grip of Miss Beale. He put them back in the study cupboard in their cardboard box. He lit a pipe and picked up a book from his desk. It was a beautiful edition of "The Holy Sonnets of Donne," given to him by his wife, not long before she died. Opening it at random, he began to read :

Since she whom I lov'd hath payd her last debt
To Nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,
And her Soule early into heaven is ravished,
Wholly on heavenly things my mind is sett.

In the face of this beauty the pin-pricks of life no longer wounded Griffin. He was able to forget the archness of Miss Beale, the absence of friends and the shabbiness of his home, for the splendour of faith was upon him, and his mind, the mind of poet and scholar, was caught up to heaven. Later, through 10,000 miles of infinity, he heard somebody knocking at the front door.

"Who can it be?" thought Griffin. "I hope it's not to say that Tom Carver is worse. Cancer. My God. Belief isn't always easy."

A young man, muffled up, was standing on the steps. He was a stranger to Griffin, but he had an intelligent, sensitive face.

"Forgive me calling like this," he said. "But are you Mr. Griffin?"

"That is my name. Won't you come in out of the cold?"

"Thank you," said the younger man. "As a matter of fact I'm to be your neighbour. I'm the new Vicar of Pemberton."

"My dear fellow, come along to the study," said Griffin. "So you've taken old Warley's place. I ought to have been over to your induction, but I have no car. No excuse though; I should have bussed. What's your name, by the way?"

"Reeves."

They moved into the study.

"I'm afraid it's horribly untidy," said Griffin. "I'm here on my own. Are you married?"

"Only a month ago," said Reeves. "This is my first living. It's a wonderful adventure for us together," he added.

"I hope you will both be as happy down here as I was with my wife," said Griffin. "And if I can be of any use to you, with books or anything, let me know."

"And I've got a small car, so I may be able to help you in return," replied Reeves.

"That really would be kind. I'm a bit stranded here."

"I don't think you waste your time," said Reeves, who was walking round the book-shelves. "I can see you're not likely to get rusty. This is a wonderful library."

"So you're interested?"

"My word, yes. I read Classics at Cambridge and went on to theology."

"So did I," exclaimed Griffin, glowing, "but that was nearly forty-five years ago. Know any Hebrew?"

"A bit."

"Somebody to talk to at last," cried Griffin. "I've been alone since my wife died."

He had not meant to say so much.

"People don't talk my language," he added rather diffidently.

"I know," said Reeves. "Don't worry to explain, Sir."

The men had both lit their pipes.

"Don't you think we scholars are partly to blame?" asked Griffin. "We invent technical jargon. We qualify and split hairs." (*Continued on page* 54.)

Griffin found Mrs. Reeves in the garden looking gay and serene. "You're worried, Mr. Griffin," she said. "I wish I could help"

When Was Jesus Born?

New Discoveries Throw Fresh Light On Christmas Day

By Harold J. Shepstone

A humble home in Bethlehem. It is partially hewn out of the rock. Note the baby in the hammock and the dove cote in the upper centre of the picture

(*On left*) A view of Bethlehem showing the oldest part of the town. The tower to the left marks the site of the Church of the Nativity

RECENT excavations at the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, which marks the spot where Christ was born, coupled with the work of the Archaeological Department of the Turkish Government in clearing away the debris which partially buried the great temple to Augustus Caesar at Ankara, have revealed new and fascinating facts concerning the birth of Jesus.

But let it be said at once that these discoveries do not raise the slightest suspicion of the authenticity of the Scriptures. Though some may regard them as even sensational, they actually confirm the Biblical story. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the twenty-fifth day of December is not regarded by most scholars as the birthday of Jesus.

On the other hand, however, the year 8 B.C. is now accepted as the year of His birth. According to the calendar, Christ was born 1948 years ago. Previously no one could be sure of the exact year, for the Latin chronographer who, in A.D. 354, fixed the date, had little to guide him. There was no convenient registration of births and deaths in his day.

No such uncertainty, however, surrounds the place where Christ was born —"the little town of Bethlehem." Both Matthew and Luke record His birth, but fail to indicate dates. Matthew tells us that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the days of Herod." Luke is more descriptive. He records that the birth took place "in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. . . . And all went to be taxed, every one to his own city. . . . And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth . . . unto Bethlehem . . . with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child."

Luke also adds the valuable information that the tax was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. This would imply that the census was one of many, or, at the very least, that there had been a previous taxation. This information by Luke caused much controversy among Biblical scholars in the past, and he has even been accused of inventing a census so that he could account for Mary's presence in Bethlehem. To-day, however, it has been proved that Luke was historically correct.

It has been ascertained that Augustus ordered a census to be taken on three different occasions, (*Continued on page* 56)

Principal bell in the belfry of the Latin Church of St. Catherine, which forms part of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. The bells in this belfry are often rung on Christmas Eve and broadcast over the radio to many countries

(*On left*)
Recently discovered mosaics in the apse of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem

DO YOU BELIEVE

By Warren Armstrong

THE mechanism of a grandfather clock is a very simple affair; a matter of elementary stresses and strains which with diligent winding cause a second hand to tick Time away. Little can go wrong among the wheels and rachets—providing it is just a normal piece of useful furniture. Mine is not. It's haunted. If it wasn't for the fact that a film involved me in the world of spectres and strange Shapes, I would never have acquired it . . . from a ghost-ridden house.

The name doesn't matter; but René Clair produced a picture based on the story of a wealthy American who bought a haunted castle, had it transported to the U.S. ghost included. A neat piece of camera work, but its spooky angle provoked me into contacting a psychic expert who explained that, to be true to all known psychic laws, that ghost just *had* to stay attached to the old castle, whether the idea of emigration appealed to it, or not.

He said: "Phantoms only haunt *houses*, not *people*. Intense anguish in life, or mental torture, cruelty, vengeance, shock, or violent death, all these are among factors contributing towards general conditions which bind ghosts to our earth-world." He rang me up next morning: "If you're really interested—come down to my place for the week-end; I'm hoping to 'lay' a spectre in a nearby cottage. It's an unusually interesting story." I went.

I SUPPOSE Folly Cottage was the prettiest place I've ever seen; part of the estate of a hard-riding, hard-drinking hunting man, after his death it was given to his children's old nurse. But so great had been his love for the cottage that he swore on his deathbed he would return, to enjoy its comfort . . . *in the shape of a favourite gun-dog!* Almost immediately, every dog in the village was put to sleep. But he came back. And what was infinitely worse, the phantom hound worried, then killed a magnificent cat belonging to the little old lady. She died . . . and Folly Cottage had become a place to be shunned like the plague!

As we entered the low-beamed hall I shivered. It was a natural phenomenon, said my companion, for the spectral world draws upon heat and natural atmosphere and transforms it into mechanical energy. We lit a log fire, and sat down in silence to wait. And as we sat there an unlit candle nearby popped into flame just as the fire uncannily snuffed out.

"Look at that dog of yours!" My companion spoke in a whisper. Bob's eyes were wide, staring. His hair was stiff. His teeth were bared, and he whimpered. Quietly, softly. Then he growled . . . and fell silent. For Bob had *heard* long before we did; whatever was about to happen, the old dog experienced It . . . and It was Something we mere humans could not perceive. A split second later we shared his secret.

The atmosphere became clammy-cold as faltering steps passed through the low-beamed hall, mounted the short stairway and faded into semi-darkness. We followed. And then we saw Her . . . a little old lady, in lavender-grey, who walked right through the closed door of a bedroom. In her hand she held the candle which had been by my side as we sat by that log fire! Her eyes were infinitely sad . . . and questing. She walked to a far wall of the bedroom, bent down—and disappeared from sight. . . .

One portion of the bedroom wainscot was hinged; and as it creaked outwards my companion produced a small oak box. It contained the mummified remains of a large cat.

"And this," he said, "is the cause of the visitation. This is the kind of thing we look for; it might be an old chair, a bed, any piece of furniture. When it's discovered, we destroy the particular article to which the phantom became so attached during lifetime. But if an amateur tries unsuccessfully to solve a mystery like this, ghosts—who are the unhappy inhabitants of a nightmare world—sometimes have unpleasant methods of expressing disapproval; then you get strange noises, ghostly lights, often a bad odour. You

IN GHOSTS?

know, a door slammed by an unseen hand can have a disturbing effect in a haunted house."

We went downstairs. And there I made the acquaintance of the grandfather clock; a stately Old Gentleman he had been in his day, but he was now in a sorry plight. His body leaned crazily at an alarming angle; his head was awry. His face was dirty, and his fine-wrought hands were locked fast at twelve. I heard his story. He had stopped at midnight, when the old lady died. And rather than strike the normal hour, his gong went on to chime eighteen . . . at dawn neighbours found a bat's wing attached to the pendulum. So I took the Old Gentleman into my own home—itself reputed to be haunted, for it is one of the earliest post-houses of Southern England. And there he has been supremely happy, recording the Time diligently, chiming the hours without a sign of waywardness. . . .

ACCORDING to undisputed records, Britain has about fifty haunted castles, and more than 1,000 spectre-ridden, ordinary houses. The phantoms don't all belong to the headless monk, the hooded apparition, or the rattling chain type; quite a few have been seen dressed in plus-fours, some in modern evening gowns, and others driving ghostly cars which rush through quiet country lanes, and even along the deserted streets of a sleeping city.

I have seen a horned, staring-eyed phantom at the home of Robert de Belesme. I have watched the Lady Dorothy walk the Long Gallery at Salmesbury Hall . . . where a spectral priest moans in the gardens. And at Claverhouse, near Dundee, the ghost of Graham, of Jacobite and Covenanter fame, every year haunts the castle while uncanny lights blaze from empty rooms and an awful pandemonium lasts for an hour as the spectre walks . . . and walks . . . and walks into the New Year dawn. . . .

You will know, of course, of the tenure of Sauchiemuir Castle? It was secured by the laying of a glass of wine, fruit, a plateful of cakes ". . . tastefully on a table each New Year's Eve at midnight."

They were placed there to be enjoyed *by the wraith of the mother of James IV of Scotland!*

For myself, I like to dwell on that rare incident which befell a lonely traveller in a compartment on the London to Liverpool night express.

As the train thundered through a long tunnel the door to the corridor slid open and a stranger appeared. He asked: "Do *you* believe in ghosts?" Replied the traveller: "Great Scot, NO!" "Pity," said the stranger, "because *I* do!" And thereupon vanished into thin air.

By
C. Patrick Thompson

Christmas UNLIMITED

"AH, what would my clients do without Christmas?"

I asked the commercial artists' agent lunching with me just what they would do.

"Go without their dinner for many a long day, my boy," replied the man of business, conveying to a capacious maw a forkful of early turkey and stuffing. "Christmas is the best-selling pictorial subject ever invented."

I hadn't seen Christmas that way before. But of course he was right. The Nativity scene has inspired artists since the catacomb days of Christianity. By the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it was providing a sure income to the painters who worked for the best-market customer, the Church. Cimabue, Giotto and his school, Ducio and the school of Siena, Martino, Lorenzetti, Cennini, were all fascinated by the imaginative problem propounded by the mystery of the Nativity. None interpreted it quite the same way. Compare Giotto's Nativity done for the Church of Santa Maria dell' Arena in Padua, with Sandro Botticelli's "Birth of Christ," and the Nativity envisionings of the latest Surrealist, and you get some idea of what has been going on, and still goes on.

It's conservatively reckoned that out of the world's commercial art mills every Christmas season pour more than a thousand million Christmas pictures, mostly for Christmas cards and calendars and box labels, but largely replicas of old concepts of the central theme of religious art, the Birth of Christ in a stable in a little Arab outpost town of the Roman Empire 1,948 years ago.

Christmas is just a gearing of the Christian legend to older pagan legends, all bound up with the cycle of the seasons and the adoration of life itself. The sun turns on its winter course, and the old year, dying, gives birth to a new year, and new life. Men pause, and rejoice. On a seasonal basis, Christmas should be celebrated in Tanganyika in June, and in Australia in August. The old Egyptians and Persians celebrated the turn of the year on September 21. The Jewish New Year is still celebrated in early autumn. In old England, December 25 was New Year's Day. In medieval Europe, March 25 was the New Year. Nobody knows when Christ was born. Suppose someone turned up the real date of the Birth? Imagine the headlines!

Christmas : the Truth at Last!

Date finally established : August 25!

All Christmas Literature and Customs Obsolete.

Sun to Replace Snow, Flowers Evergreens, in All Christmas Pictures, Stories, Carols, Celebrations.

Printing, Publishing Shares Boom on Stock Exchange.

I mentioned the thought to my host, accepted his cigar, and, having an engagement to discuss the Christmas trade with a wholesale poulterer, left him reflective over his cognac, dreaming of the gold that lay at the Christmas rainbow's end for him if only somebody could establish the Birth of Christ in high summer.

Holly and mistletoe, tinsel and tree-candle clips, fir saplings, coloured paper streamers, caps and crackers: you could fill a 1,000-page catalogue with all the items specially made, imported, prepared, traded at Christmastime. And even then you'd miss a lot. The six ceremonial flags, and royal crown, for instance, that the university-kitchen chefs use to decorate the traditional boar's head at Oxford. The green toasting bands that bind the bundle of ash faggots they throw on the Christmas fire in Somerset.

I ran across that custom, spending Christmas with friends on a Somerset farm. It seems that ten centuries ago Danish marauders arrived on Christmas Eve, and grew chilled waiting for dawn, and battle. They didn't know what the Saxon farmers knew : that green ash will burn. So the Saxon farmers warmed up by a green-ash fire, and went forth to fight on Christmas morning with flexible muscles and hot food in

(*Continued on page 58*)

Walk Of The Moon

Strange Things Happened When A Mysterious Man Asked For A Night's Shelter At A Yorkshire Farm

By Vincent Cornier

"YOU'D better go out and see him" Mary insisted. "He's certainly not a tramp. But——"

Ben Peters looked across at his young wife. That odd glistering, as of a passion secretly contained, was in her eyes. Every now and then she looked like this: luminous, restless. And at such times she would speak in vagrant ways, and the tendrils about her forehead crisped and her smiling was a thin patience.

Peters was clever. He saw her eyes dreamed desire, but her hair was normal, and she was urgent and impatient.

"You took a heck of a long time, talking to him."

"So will you." Smiling secretly she touched him and her touch on his bared arm was warm. "Oh, Ben, don't keep him hanging around. Go outside to him."

The farmer strode the stone floor of his kitchen decisively. It wasn't like Mary to effervesce about backdoor callers. Who *was* this fellow?

At first he saw the man against the lambency of the evening sky: a pile of shadow, dark as an ilex. Through the uncovered mane of his hair—a silver shagginess—a nimbus, came radiant. Peter's racial love of the extravagant in simile, caused him to think of a torch held steadily, thinly aflame.

"Well, mister, and what d'you want, this time o' night?" There was no time to spare, now-a-days, for lonely wanderers up in hilltop farms. "If you're on the lug, you're dead unlucky. No butter, no eggs—nothing for sale."

"I am not seeking to buy from you."

Mary had been right. This was no tramp. The voice was a perfection of musical sound. Maybe one of those artist or writer fellows who occasionally came up into the hills. Good spenders. Rattling good talkers, too; but crazy as coots, the whole boiling of 'em.

Benjamin Peters managed a smile—at once apologetic and wryly defensive. The stranger might be worth a quid or two, if he wanted food and a brief lodge. Albeit, there was no escaping the uncanny impact of him. He was a queer specimen. Somehow he frightened one.

"Sorry mister! My mistake. But y'know, we get so many townsfolk up here, all on the same game." Peters shrugged and spread his hands to indicate the distances which held the town. The valley had woven its first veilings of night, hemmed by close parallels of roadside lamps, three miles away. "People don't tramp all this way to the moors unless they're after the black. After a bit extra on their rations, that is."

"I seek no more than rest. I spoke to your wife about my wants. They are simple. Might I have food and shelter for the night?"

Um—business, eh? That's why Mary was so het-up. Peters' thoughts swarmed swiftly. Must have nosed him out as a good payer. O.K. I'll be on.

The stranger had turned a little, so that the effulgent afterglow shone upon him clearly. *A new moon was thin* above a lonely gem of star. It seemed as though the crescented glory was mirrored in the stranger's eyes.

No longer dark and featureless, he appeared as something ominous and curiously old. His serene stillness was an awesome thing.

Again Peters felt his fears. He hesitated, watched, and kept back his words. . . . The hair and beard of this man could not have known shears in years; the face, no sun. Gentle grey eyes enlightened alabaster flesh, channelled by sorrows. Clothing was sombre, dusty and loose.

Then the farmer's qualms were dissolved. He recollected a similar visitor—a tramping and roystering galliard, who had told Peters his living was gained by "modelling" as a prophet or saint, for sculptors and artists. He, too, had been bearded and heavily maned: gently spoken, curiously strange. Evidently here was another of that type—on the pad.

"Right you are, mister. If your money's good, I can fix you up."

"You are kind. Thank you. Let me pay you now."

"Nay! Morning'll do. I'm no blasted kike!"

Somehow a silent thunder grew on the air between them. Benjamin Peters saw the stranger's snowy teeth.

THE boy tottered straight into the stranger's waiting arms. He snuggled, contentedly, and his rosy face quizzed his mother, like an elf, a damsel-fly

"*Kike?* What is a kike?"

The farmer grinned and smoothed his strongly-shaped nose, one little finger cocked at an angle. "A skin-pant New York Jew," he said.

"But—you are not of New York?"

"No, I'm not. Though, mind y', I've lived there—all over the world; labourer, farmer, stockman, beggarman—sometimes thief." Peters, turning to his porch, seemed to pause and poise himself truculently on one extended foot. "No more am I a—a Jew."

"I felt you were. I know—I am," The stranger's words broke like a banner: with a whipping and a velvety plunge to pomp. "Know that I am—a Jew."

"Aye?" Smarmingly, a new voice spoke from behind the farmer and his guest. "Why nah then—no 'arm i' that, maister. We're all as t' good God made us, ses I—"

"Hey, Jukes!" Peters snarled. "Who the hell asked you t' put your spoke in? Mind your own business. Anyway—what d'you want here?"

Jukes, a stunted and grizzled farm-hand who had sidled near, appeared fascinated by the stranger. His little eyes sparkled half in fear, half in cunning. Scratching his stubble, he stepped backwards. His mouth had opened, as if he were amazed. Pipe-worn teeth, tobacco fouled, showed; excited slavers foamed along them.

The fellow was a curious concentration of nervousness, eagerness and agitation. He smelt of animal filths, he was baleful and repulsive. Yet the stranger, in a delicate dignity, looked down on him as on a human equality.

"Each of us is as he was made," came a sonorous answering. "Each in the charity and mercy of all others. Each a secret never to be surprised—not even by love."

"*Aye?* Why nah then—nah then!" Jukes went, heel-toe, even farther away. He was oddly fawning; humouring, still furtive. "That'll be book l'arnin' most likely——"

"Jukes! I'll not ask you again. What are you after?"

"Nobbut a ten bob sub, Boss. Just till t' week-end. I'm bahn dahn t' t' village t'neet."

"Thought you told me you weren't going any more this week—after the last do?"

"Aw. I've changed me mind, like. Fed up. 'Sides, I've just remembered a bit o' business wants doin'. Gi'es me ten bob, an' let's be off."

Peters grumbled, but handed over the note. "Mind you don't turn up stinking-tight again," he warned.

"On ten mingey bob?" Jukes leered. "*Garht!*"

Even now, Peters did not cross his threshold. He watched Jukes go down the cobbled yard, cross by a rusted plough, stand on its swivel-trees, step over to a breach in the drystone walling of the hill pasture, and grab at the gnarled bough of an old elder—one of seven similar boughs, agonized, as it were, half across the gap. Deftly, Jukes evaded a strand of pig-wire that loosely spanned the breach in the stone. Beyond this boundary there was a deep drop, into the hillside field.

"And I've told you for the last time—" Peters shouted after his man—"stop going that way. Use the stackyard gate in future. You'll be breaking your silly neck one of these days. Anyway—you can get that wall mended to-morrow."

"Aw reight! Keep y' curly 'air on," came the snarling reply. "Y'll ha' t' be findin' yersel' a new man if y' don't watch aht. If y'll belly-ache abaht a short cut, y'll belly-ache abaht owt, you will."

Peters, simmering with fury, but his eyes going sidelong away from the stranger's gaze, stormed into the house.

"Cheeky hound—but there, he's got me, and he knows it well enough." He spread a savage gesture. "You can tell 'em till you're sick—and will they hellas-like take heed! That's a death trap. And I'll have it walled up to-morrow if it's the last thing I ever do—Jukes or someone else; doesn't matter." They entered the long passage-way together. "Maybe you'd like a bit of a swill before

your supper—eh? Well, the missus'll see to you all right. She's a good 'un."

A FOUR-year-old boy hobbled and chuckled out of the kitchen. He was in pyjamas and his mother—half laughing, half exasperated—followed him.

"Oh, Davy—you *naughty* little man! Daddy's busy—and Mammy's told you it's bye-byes, hasn't she?"

"Not goin' bibby-byes wivout kissin' my Dad-dad. And . . . y' can't catch me for a bumble-bee——"

The stranger saw the instant loveliness of her compassion. Her hand was almost on the back belting of David's sleeping suit, when he said he could not be caught. Her hand was arrested. She sighed—*no*—she could not presume to catch her halting little cripple of an only son. . . .

He—tottered straight into the stranger's waiting arms. He snuggled, contentedly, and his rosy face quizzed his mother, like an elf, a damsel-fly.

"Why, that," gasped Peters, "licks cock fighting!" He looked at his equally startled wife. "Ever known the likes of that before, Mary?"

"No," said the woman, and her voice was low, her eyes—still influenced by that slow lighting, as of desire—widened almost to rounds of awe. "*Never.*"

"Shy as a—a hare," Peters explained. "Him being so handicapped—and living up here in the moors, where he never sees another bairn for weeks on end. I've never known him to take to a strange face. *Gosh!* But—but it's uncanny!"

The stranger's arms gentled the child. "Surely," he asked of them, "not uncanny—to go where love is?"

As that imminence of thunder had seemed to grow between the men at the door, so, now, a great soft silence held the air. Peters felt at his face; something was cold in him, tightening and encroaching on his flesh: prickling, with spicules as of ice or fire, under his hair.

Then the woman spoke into the moment—inconsequently, irrelevantly almost—fiercely. A passion, declared now as mingled awe and wild excitement, made her looking as of the shimmering of topaze in gold sun.

". . . A mad brute of a horse, it was. It—it broke loose. That gap in the wall outside's where it went over; smashed its near foreleg. And our little David tumbled right in its way. His right thigh and kneecap both got it. Both broken." The leonine smoulder died from her gaze, under the stranger's sweet regard of peace. Fierce flesh of woman wilted. She bowed her head and was still. "We—we've had specialists. They all say he'll never walk properly again. Poor wee scrap—him and his irons. He calls them 'Davy's leggy-weg cages'. . . ."

"Sometimes it is given that the snared bird flies back to its freedoms." Serenely he held the little boy. "What has been for me, might yet be for him, who is your only son."

"One can but pray—and hope," she sighed.

As Jukes had stepped back, and away, from the stranger, in the yard, so now did Peters step. Something was greater, here, than his warm clay. Something, of a majesty supernal, bonded that trinity—the man from the edges of night, this woman, his wife, and that child—his son. The ancient blood of him remarked it; made him mystically aware. His shoes burned hotly on his feet. . . .

He saw the dreaming face of his David raised to that of the stranger. He saw the little coral mouth touched by pale lips. Supine, lazily smiling, the child was handed back to his mother. She seemed as though she bent a knee, taking him.

"He will sleep," came a promise from the man, "although I have usurped the kiss he wished to give to his father."

Then, oddly, he said—"Not until I go will he awaken."

"Come with me, sir," whispered Peters, after a silence. "Happen you—you'd care to sit down."

He had found, to his stupefaction, he wanted so much himself. He felt weak; cringling, tremulous.

While Mary was putting David in his cot and seeing to her domestic affairs in the small spare room, the men talked of weather and crops, of hillside roads and of paths across the moorlands. Peters unlaced his boots and put on slippers. He lit his pipe and smoked gustily.

"*Marvellous!*" He wagged his dark head in the shadows behind the uprising wreaths. "As I say, we've never known Davy to do anything like that before. *Never!* Took an enormous fancy to you, he did." Then spoke the Jew he had previously denied—in the solemn duties to the stranger within the gate. "As between our two selves, sir, I—I want you here as my guest. Understand? I've knocked about the world too long to have collected much gear. But what I have, what there is of it, make yourself free on't."

Returning, Mary saw the stranger washing his hands. She also saw the used huckaback towelling behind the scullery door. Without perceptible hesitation she moved to an old mahogany tallboy.

Their guest dried his hands on exquisitely-

(*Continued on page* 61)

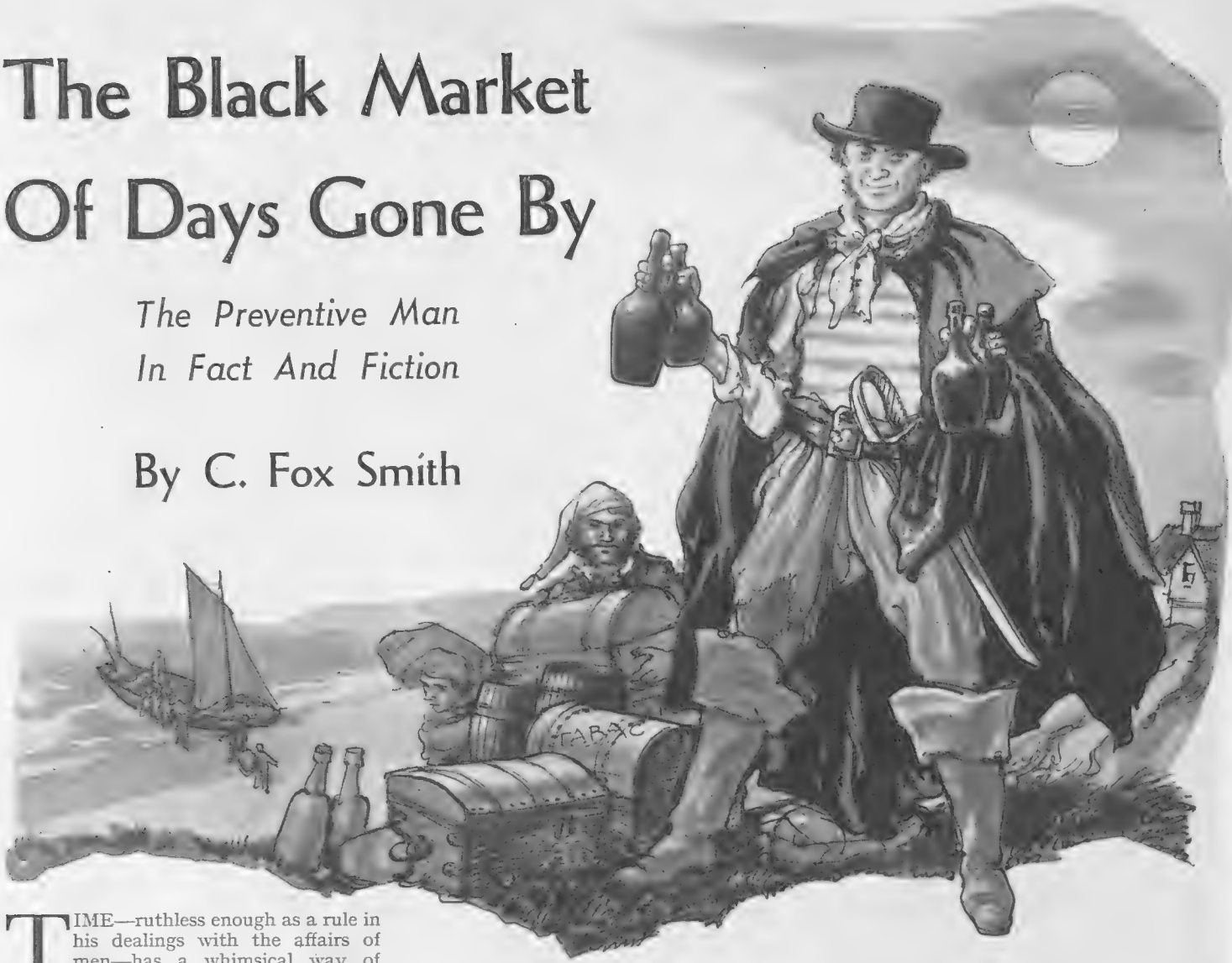
Illustrations by Tony Weare

THE stranger turned as the back of the ambulance opened. Its dim interior light came bluely on his face. "Farewell," he sighed to them. "For your little son I have left a gift. To you, Benjamin and Mary—be my love. Mary . . . thou art blessed . . . thou knowest"

The Black Market Of Days Gone By

The Preventive Man In Fact And Fiction

By C. Fox Smith



Smugglers were reckless, unscrupulous and desperate men who were ready and willing to take the risk of obtaining and disposing of goods in short supply

TIME—ruthless enough as a rule in his dealings with the affairs of men—has a whimsical way of showing an unexpected kindliness towards the memory of the undeserving. This paradoxical tenderness is chiefly displayed towards certain types of lesser lawbreakers, over whose sordid and unedifying lives the veil of the years draws all too often a quite deceptive glamour; and nowhere, perhaps, is this more noticeable than in the case of the smuggler.

Popular songs, ballads and oral tradition, to say nothing of novels and romances, have all conspired through the centuries to glorify the courage and ingenuity of the smuggling fraternity, and exalt into something little less than heroism activities which—reasonably looked at—were exerted for the purpose of adding to the country's difficulties in her time of need. The smuggler, in sober fact, was neither more nor less than the Black Marketeer of his period, and his proceedings are no more worthy of the term "romantic" than those of the hijackers of Rum Row or the warehouse and lorry raiders of our own time. It was the same, or similar circumstances which brought, as they must always bring, such gentry into existence; on the one hand, goods "in short supply," as modern parlance has it, in the case of the smuggler of the past silks, laces and French brandy, and people ready and willing to pay the price for them; and on the other reckless, unscrupulous and desperate men equally ready and willing to take the risk of catering for their needs.

AND if Time has been rather more than kind to the smuggler, he has been a good deal less than fair to his protagonist the Preventive Man, the popular attitude towards whom was and is pretty much that expressed in Burns's ballad, "The de'il's awa' wi' the Exciseman. . . . I wish him luck of his prize, man!" In nine out of ten smuggling stories the gauger is the butt, the victim, and the dupe of the bold and ingenious "Fair Trader"—a dull, stupid, timid creature whose mission in life is to play the part of stooge to his dashing rival.

A zealous Excise officer carried his life in his hand, and more than one instance is recorded of the price such men paid for their devotion

And, especially in the earlier days of smuggling, there was a certain amount of truth in the picture. It would, indeed, be surprising if it were otherwise. Customs officers were few in number, generally hopelessly outnumbered by the men they were supposed to contend with. They often held their posts rather by favour than for their fitness for them, and continued to hold them long after they should have been pensioned. A paragraph in a Sussex newspaper so late as 1834 records the retirement of three riding officers whose ages were eighty-four, eighty and seventy-two, all of whom had been over half a century in the service!

Moreover, the life of a Customs officer in a district where smuggling was the main industry, was by no means a pleasant one. His presence was always resented, passively if not actively. No one cared to be intimate with him for fear of coming under suspicion as an (*Continued on page* 62)

A STUART CHRISTMAS

King Charles II. And His "Baby-face" Barbara Villiers, Countess Of Castlemaine

Illustrated by JACK MATTHEW.

"A HAPPY CHRISTMAS!" was no mere formal greeting to Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine, in the third year of the Restoration. She could lift high her pretty auburn head, gaze round Charles II.'s gay and profligate Court, and reflect: "*I have conquered; I have achieved what I set out to do.*"

Almost every night of the week the lovesick Charles would attend her candle-lit supper parties in the King Street house near his Whitehall Palace—to spend glad hours jesting, dancing, gambling, making love in riotous company. When the other guests left, he remained with his enchanting "Baby-face"—until dawn greyed the London sky. By noon he was with her again, to watch his lovely mistress take morning chocolate in bed.

Pepys, who doted on her beauty, noted how "the King is bewitched by this pretty Castlemaine." Bishop Burnet wrote that his passion for her, her strange behaviour towards him, "did so disorder him that often he was not master of himself nor capable of minding business." She had steered her favourites, Bennet and Berkeley, into office—the latter as Keeper of the Privy Purse, so that she could loosen its strings the more easily for her own benefit; flouted her chief enemy, Chancellor Clarendon, who opposed the patent of the Castlemaine peerage; sidetracked a tiresome husband, Roger Palmer; become a Lady of the Queen's Bedchamber in face of Katherine's bitter opposition. There was little this resolute young beauty had not achieved in a mere two to three years.

ON New Year's Eve she was the belle of the magnificent ball given by Charles at Whitehall. Pepys noted that under the dazzling chandeliers, amid the superb pageantry of courtiers and ladies, it was she who shone with the best in the dance when the King took the floor with the Duchess of York, the Duke and Duchess of Buckingham, to open the revelries. Pepys was delighted with the glittering scene, "the greatest pleasure I could wish to see at Court."

The miracle is that she should have stepped straight into this enviable glory when she was an ambitious bride of eighteen, accompanying her husband to the King's exiled Court at Breda, in Holland, in the winter of 1659-60. Daughter of Lord Grandison, who died serving Charles I. in the Civil War, her family had known riches, and then, under Cromwell, the relative poverty which impelled her to a disappointing marriage which Palmer's father tried to prevent by warning him: "If you persist in marrying that woman, I predict that you will live to be the most miserable man in the world."

She had violet eyes, a captivating face and figure, a gay, vivacious manner and audacious wit which quickly made her the centre of attraction. Soon the susceptible Charles had fallen for her charms, and from that moment her star was in the ascendant. It is doubtful if infidelity to Roger troubled her conscience. He, in common with other wealthy Royalists, was already helping Charles with loans. If the King needed her love as well as his money,

why should she, a Villiers, Royalist to the backbone, refuse him? Did not the Divine Right of Stuart Kings extend to beds as well as thrones?

Secretly at Breda she evidently became the Royal mistress with a directness that permitted of no evasive coquetry, and when, in May, on his twenty-ninth birthday, Charles returned in triumph to London along bannered roads lined with a cheering multitude, Barbara's position was virtually that of unacknowledged queen of the Restoration festivities. The pair were now passionately in love—and what a time of exaltation that was for him, to gain a throne, a kingdom, and a brilliant young woman's heart at the same time!

IN July Pepys, hovering in King Street with friends, by the King's privy garden, heard "great doings of music" in Barbara's new house and recorded "the King and dukes there with Madame Palmer, a pretty woman that they have taken a fancy to, to make her husband a cuckold." The following February she presented Roger—or should one not say Charles, since he had no illusions about her paternity—with a daughter, Anne and thereafter made Barbara his public favourite, riding with her in his coach, parading her in his box at the theatre.

One would have thought that the King's politic marriage to Katherine of Braganza might put Barbara discreetly into the shadows, with due compensation for services rendered. Not at all. Her *amour-propre* had to be mollified, of course, her jealous tears dried with promises for the future; but in her heart she feared no serious competition from a Portuguese bride of whom Charles whispered, when he met her at Portsmouth: "Odds fish, I believe

they have brought me a bat instead of a woman!" Besides, had she not been made, by way of *amende*, Countess of Castlemaine, with the Marshalship of the King's Bench Prison for Roger, as well as the Earldom, to redress his injured dignity? Had she not borne a second child, royally named Charles?

Katherine had been not long a Queen when Barbara was whisked into her presence on the King's hand before a company of courtiers and ladies. So *this* was my Lady Castlemaine of whom, scandalously, she had heard? Charles actually had the effrontery to present his mistress to his Queen! It was too much for the Portuguese conscience. She crimsoned, collapsed in her seat, burst into tears, fainted, and had to be carried to her bedchamber. Charles, exasperated, waved the chattering, excited company away. Barbara retired to King Street in a pet, to "have it out" with him at the first opportunity.

Then came the fight over the Bedchamber appointment. Charles was set on it as a means of vindicating the prestige and honour of one whom whisperers were condemning as little more than a King's harlot. Barbara wanted it for these and perhaps more personal reasons—to revenge herself for the scene at that first reception. Charles pleaded, placated; the Queen stamped and fumed. *Castlemaine a Lady of her Bedchamber? Never, never!* It was an indignity, an insult. Rather would she return to Portugal and her mother. "Before you do,"

On New Year's Eve Barbara Villiers was the belle of the magnificent ball given by Charles at Whitehall. It was she who shone with the best in the dance when the King took the floor with the Duchess of York

Charles retorted, as lesser husbands have done, " you will do well to find out how your mother will receive you ! "

They screamed and shouted at each other in a most unroyal brawl. When Clarendon tried to mediate in the affair Charles wrote him a petulant letter warning him not to meddle, for he was resolved on this thing, and " whosoever I find use any endeavour to hinder this resolution of myne (except it be only to myselfe) I will be his enimy to the last moment of my life . . . and whosoever I find to be My Lady Castlemaine's enimy in this matter, I do promise, upon my word, to be his enimy as long as I live." In the end the Queen had to swallow her pride ; Barbara got her way.

She finally disposed of the tiresome Roger by removing herself, jewels, goods and chattels, to her uncle's home at Richmond Palace and arranging a £10,000 settlement for his claims. When she moved back to King Street she was free to enjoy the King's attentions unhampered. They were now so blatant that he would laugh and coquet with her—even kiss her—in the Queen's presence ; and when Katherine swept out, unable to stand the humiliation any longer, the courtiers laughed too, and made ribald jokes at her expense.

BY this third Christmas Barbara was indeed the King's Lady, wielding a power behind the throne, dispensing favours and offices to her own profit, fawned upon by the Court's place-seekers.

Later she was to discover the penalties of power, the rivalry of that pretty, empty-headed maid of honour, Frances Stuart, culminating in a flare-up at table when they slanged each other like fishwives—all but tore each other's hair—

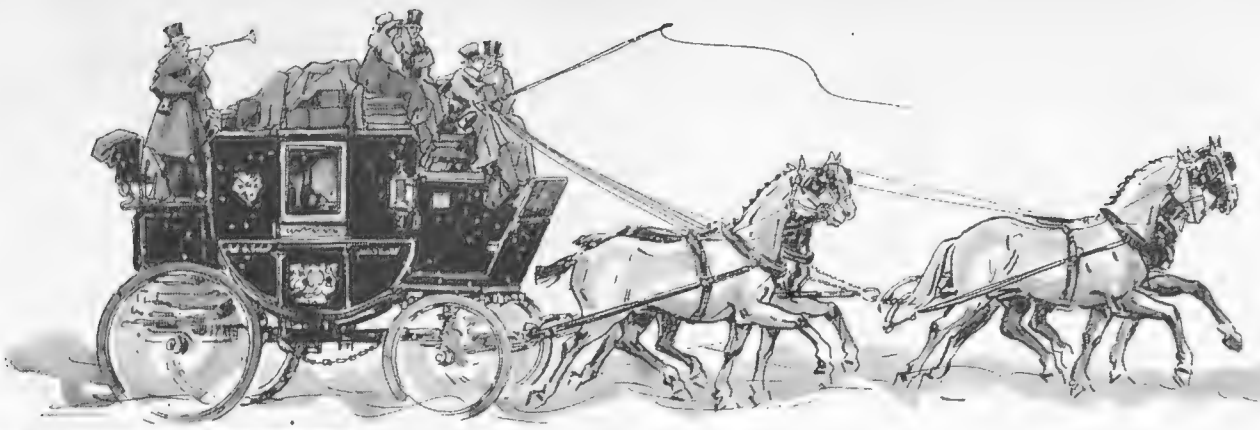
The rivalry of the pretty, empty-headed maid of honour, Frances Stuart, culminated in a flare-up at table when they slanged each other like fishwives, and Barbara, incensed at Charles taking the maid's part, left the room in a rage.

and Barbara, incensed at Charles taking the maid's part, left the room in a rage, flung herself into her coach, and fled again to Richmond Palace.

Mistress Stuart was as pretty as a dainty doll—and about as brainy. It was hardly possible for a woman to have " less wit or more beauty," said Anthony Hamilton, who was in love with her. It is related that Charles was once conferring with a Muscovite diplomatic mission when the talk turned informally to the subject of women's legs—not an unfamiliar one at Charles' court. A claim was made that Russian women had the best. Charles thereupon summoned Frances to " show a leg " to establish England's claim to the honour. She tripped in, lifted her skirts, and displayed a lovely pair which moved the ambassadors to admiration.

Not for long, however, did this rupture last. Charles followed her there to beg forgiveness. He could not dispense—yet—with his Babyface, even though he considered the dainty Frances's legs the handsomest in England and her vaunted virginity a prize worth winning. Barbara retained her power long enough to become the Duchess of Cleveland, remaining always what biographer Margaret Gilmour called her in an engrossing portrait, *The Great Lady*.

As her hold on Charles' heart slackened her hold on political and court affairs strengthened. Aided by her faction whom she had placed in office, she stopped at no intrigue to confound her enemies. She even patronised La Belle Stuart, noting with satisfaction that the minx was holding out for concessions at a price, and that Charles was finding the wooing a lengthy business, the conquest exasperatingly difficult. She might suffer jealousy when other rivals like Nell Gwynne and Louise de Querouaille came on the scene, but she had her compensations—money for her extravagant tastes, titles for her children, the continued friendship of Charles, which he had pledged at the time of his marriage, and lovers to relieve her boredom. [END.]



SOME OTHER CHRISTMASES

by HARRY J. GREENWALL

WE in Britain rather like to think that we hold some sort of copyright over the traditional celebration of Christmas. We speak and write of a "real Dickens Christmas," meaning snow and Christmas cards with pictures of robin red breasts and coaches; we symbolize Christmas with roaring log wood fires and, of course, plum pudding, turkey and mince pies. But most particularly do we cling to the idea of what we call the "old-fashioned Christmas" and we talk with melancholy of a "green Christmas" and its dire result. Yet, really you know, facts and figures fail to prove that the "snows of yester year" were any deeper or the cold any colder than the Christmases of present memory. I suppose it is because Christmas is a season of sentimentality that we like to think *Christmas Carol* and the conversion of Mr. Scrooge made the old-time Christmases more joyous than those we knew. I beg to differ. Therefore, if your coal ration suffices and the logs you bought last summer were not too green, draw your chair closer to the fireplace and let us discourse of some other Christmases. Christmas in other lands, let us so title our talk.

That roaring log in your fireplace, the orange flame with the apple green centre. Do you happen to know the legend and lore of your Yule Log, by the way? Up north they consider it unlucky to have to light the log twice. Once upon a time the Christmas candle, which was about eighteen inches long, was stuck on a block of wood, known as the Yule Log. It was customary to light this on Christmas Eve, when the mummers came round. These mummers, play actors, were undoubtedly the forerunners of the carol singers.

The family sat round the fire and when the mummers had played their piece they were offered a mug of posset ale which was made from milk and nutmeg mixed in a bowl which I think was undoubtedly the origin of the wassail bowl.

Well, here we are, talking of the Yule Log, so British, what?

Not at all. Over in France they call the Yule Log *une bûche de Noël* and it is as traditional as a British Yule Log. Now, in French a woodcutter is called *un bûcheron*, but in French slang, to "come a cropper" is *"de ramasser une bûche"*—literally "to pick up a log," but what the connection is I really do not know, because in English we say "as easy as falling off a log."

In France the traditional Christmas sweetmeat is called *une bûche de Noël*. It is a replica of a log of wood, made from marzipan coated with chocolate.

In France there are fireplaces in few houses, except in the country, of course. Looking into your fireplace reminds me of another French Christmas custom. In Britain one hangs up one's stocking for Father Christmas to fill. In France the children put their shoes in the fireplace on Christmas Eve; the gifts come not from a gentleman with a white beard, wearing a red cloak trimmed with ermine, but from the *"Petit Jésus,"* the Christ Child whose replica you will see in the *Crêche* in the church when you go to Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

But here is a curious thing: although shoes and not stockings are the French receptacles for Christmas gifts, yet in certain French and Italian convents, the nuns hang their stockings outside the Mother Superior's door on Christmas Eve. In the stockings the nuns thrust notes asking Saint Nicholas for his protec- (*Continued on page* 70)

Die With A Smile

Life Became Impossible For Georgette, The Toast Of Paris, So She Decided To Hit The Headlines For The Last Time

By Maurice Dekobra

A GROUP of Frenchmen were seated in a corner of the Café de la Paix swapping tales of "the good old days" of the French theatre. "The good old days," of course, are the days when one is young, or at least younger. There was talk of Bernhardt and of her troupe, of her glorious voice, her magnificent presence, and all the rest.

But one member of the group had remained silent. Perhaps it was because he was younger than the others, or perhaps it was because his favourite story didn't date back that far. In a lull in the conversation, he tapped the dottle from his pipe and cleared his throat.

"My story, gentlemen, is one of more recent vintage. It is, I admit, a little out of the ordinary. It begins, where most such stories end, in a funeral parlour. And it ends, where most such stories begin, in an actress's boudoir. It tells how a woman's worst enemy became a man's best friend. And it explains, quite incidentally, why, although cats are fashionable in theatrical society, you will never find one in a certain house on the Boulevard Haussman. The only place it could have happened was in Paris, and the only time, in the years before anyone noticed that a certain petty politician in Germany had a moustache like Charlie Chaplin's. . . ."

In Paris, as everywhere, people who die hope to go to Heaven. But in Paris, as nowhere else, they take a detour. No one who is anyone in Paris would think of dying without first having made arrangements to be buried by Tronchet. It was the Thing to Do. As a matter of course, Tronchet would be informed when someone was dying. Concierges, butlers, poor relations and intimate friends picked up a few francs on the side by keeping Tronchet posted. When he got such a tip, he would immediately send out one of his discreet little cards, bordered with yellow chrysanthemums:

YOU CAN DIE WITH A SMILE
If it's Tronchet who buries you.

Funerals from 10,000 francs (including flowers), Ministers of the republic, black marketeers, generals, pickpockets and an occasional artist whose family had 10,000 francs left made Tronchet's their next-to-last resting place. And Tronchet himself was used to everything and prepared for almost anything.

The entrance Georgette Georges made into his deep-carpeted halls one morning in late September was, however, one of the few things he was not prepared for. Glamorous actresses there had been in plenty, but Tronchet was used to their being in black and in tears. Georgette Georges, on the other hand, trailed yards of pink chiffon and was as radiant as she had ever been on the stage of the Theatre des Champs-Elysées. An American reporter had once labelled her in print as being "gaudy, but not neat." He had been fired, but the label had stuck because it was a good one.

Her hair was a flaming red-gold, naturally uncontrollable. She wore it long, unadorned save for a small green toque which matched her eyes and set off the extreme pallor of her face. Her figure was, as might be expected of a young French actress, perfect—sinuous, splendidly modelled. It could hardly be said of her that she belonged in a funeral parlour, even one so ultra-chic as Tronchet's.

THE evening was definitely a complete success and Mademoiselle Georgette Georges did the honours with her usual charm and grace

This latter celebrity raised his eyebrows a little and himself altogether. clearly here was a case out of the ordinary. "Mademoiselle Georges," he said in that deep, clear, reverberating voice which was one of his most valuable assets, "how can I help you?"

Georgette's voice was no slouch, either. It had thrilled thousands on the stage and millions on the radio. But now she was not particularly interested in making an impression, and her tone was crisp as she told him, "Monsieur Tronchet, I want to order a coffin."

The mortician's eyebrows went up a little more. "You have lost a dear one,

Mademoiselle? Please accept my most heartfelt sympathy." Obviously his informants had slipped up on an important death, and he promised himself that heads would roll. But when he spoke, his voice let out all the *tremolo* stops, and he sounded almost ready to cry. "A coffin for a man or a woman?"

"A woman, Monsieur, a woman. Myself."

Tronchet's eyebrows almost met his hairline. "A coffin for *you*, Mademoiselle? Really? Already?"

"For me. Already."

"But——"

"Is there anything to keep me from ordering my coffin in advance?"

"Most certainly not, Mademoiselle. I——"

"I'm of age. Is there any reason why I can't prepare for my death ahead of time?"

"Of course not, Mademoiselle." Tronchet was in agony. "But——"

"Well, then," Georgette proclaimed imperiously, "I want to order my coffin. They say that you have a fairly good selection. May I, or may I not, see your catalogue?"

"*Oui*, Mademoiselle."

Out of a discreetly hidden drawer Tronchet extracted a book bound in black leather and tastefully tooled in silver. Its pages were filled with pictures of mausoleums, tombs, urns and funeral processions at prices ranging from 10,000 francs to 300,000. "The coffins begin on page fourteen, Mademoiselle," he said.

Georgette flipped the pages idly, examining successively the plain polished, maple coffin (within reach of every purse), the black-painted oak coffin (semi-de luxe) with nickel handles, the black mahogany bier (de luxe) inlaid with Louis XV designs and lined with white satin, and, finally, the (super-de luxe) ebony bier, with cameo inlays and gold corners in Empire style, padded and lined with Tronchet's famous shade, Trianon blue.

This masterwork seemed almost to satisfy Georgette. "This one will do," she stated flatly. "How much?"

"Two hundred thousand francs, Mademoiselle," replied the completely defeated undertaker.

"But I want the lining to be Parma violet," she told him. "*My* colour."

"But—but——" Tronchet began to work up one of his well-known rages, but reconsidered on seeing the glint in Georgette's eye. He knew when he had met his match : he shrugged his shoulders. "Yes, Mademoiselle, I can arrange it."

"And no Gothic letters on the lid. They're just too, too sad. A monogram in simple Roman letters would be original. And one thing more : instead of this square cushion in blue silk, I want an oval one in mauve crêpe de chine. I just *adore* mauve."

"Anything to be of service, Mademoiselle. Roman monogram, oval cushion, mauve. Let's say fifteen inches. Of course, these modifications will take a little time, three weeks perhaps—" Tronchet permitted himself a slight smile. "But since you won't need this coffin for at least fifty years, such a short delay won't be very important."

"On the contrary, Monsieur Tronchet. I want delivery by Friday."

"Friday? But, but, but, that only gives me five days ! Nothing is *ever* done in Paris in five days, Mademoiselle. You know that. *Everything* takes three weeks."

"Friday, Monsieur."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear. Very well, Mademoiselle. Friday. But I assure you that this is most irregular, most extraordinary. Oh, dear. And where—that is, to what home I mean——" Not for twenty years had Tronchet been so flustered.

"My home, Monsieur. Boulevard Haussman. Number 18. Friday. Have you a blank cheque?"

Georgette scribbled on the pad he offered her, threw a hasty "*Bonjour*, Monsieur," over her shoulder, and swept out. Her exits from the stage were invariably accompanied by roars of applause, but this one was wasted. By the time she reached the door, Tronchet had fallen into his armchair, worn out.

SUNK in the cushions of her Hispano-Suiza, behind her uniformed chauffeur, Georgette abandoned herself to tears. The wine of life, six months ago so sweet, had turned to vinegar in her mouth. Everything had gone wrong. It wasn't bad enough that André Gide had flatly refused to write a play for her about the Empress Eugénie. It wasn't enough that the lead in the new production of *The Barber of Seville* had gone to a little snip out of the chorus of the *Folies Bergere*. But Pedro had walked out, and life was impossible. *Her* Pedro !

It had been the perfect romance. From the night when his champagne cork had landed in her onion soup at Maxim's, splashing and ruining Maggy Rouff's latest and greatest creation, to the night when they had sworn eternal love, was one day short of three weeks. He was the Spanish bullfighter whose expert violin-playing had taken Paris by storm. She was the ornament of the French stage, Their love had made Parisian headlines. and in New York Winchell had kept his readers posted on their doings. And now he was back in Madrid, and all she had was a one-word telegram, "*Adios*," for souvenir. That, and the clippings which said that Señor Pedro Arado y Garcia, the bullfighter-violinist, would be married on Friday to Señorita Maria Gonzales, daughter of the Spanish sulphur king.

Well, Georgette would hit the headlines once more. Hers would be *the* suicide of the season. Sniffing a little, and dabbing at her eyes as her car turned into the Boulevard de la Madeleine, she reviewed her plans again.

AT four o'clock on Friday, two grunting men arrived from Tronchet's bearing the masterpiece of that most wonderful of

funeral directors. The maid who answered their ring shrieked, slammed the door in their puzzled faces, and ran to her mistress.

"Mademoiselle, come quickly! There are some men here with a coffin!"

"That's quite all right, Emilie. Have them put it in my boudoir."

"In your boudoir? But one doesn't put coffins in boudoirs, Mademoiselle."

"*I* do. Have it put there quickly."

"Put there quickly? But Mademoiselle, there are no corpses in your boudoir! None at all! I was just there and I saw that there are no corpses ——"

"Don't worry about that. I want it there. It's for a joke for to-night's party."

"For a joke for to-night's party? I don't understand."

"Emilie, will you please stop repeating every word I say? It's quite all right. I want the coffin to go into my boudoir. For a joke. For to-night's party."

"*Tres bien*, Mademoiselle. But I never heard of such a thing. Coffins in boudoirs. Jokes. That brings bad luck, that does, bringing coffins into boudoirs."

"Emilie!"

"*Oui*, Mademoiselle." And still grumbling, Emilie went to relieve the sweating men of their grim (but super de luxe) burden.

BY eight, everything was ready. Georgette was dressed in yards of gold lamé, with white orchids in her hair. The portable bar was set up and well stocked. The buffet tables were loaded with everything from *pâté de foie gras* to Roquefort. The champagne punch was ready to be iced. Emilie, rushing around giving last touches, had been sworn, with misgivings, to silence. To give the salon an air, Georgette had had it lighted with over a hundred candles. Her lips curved upward faintly.

"Die with a smile," she told herself, "that's the only thing left to do."

Emilie bustled in. "The musicians are here, Mademoiselle. And a likely looking crew they are, too, if you ask me. Just the sort of thing to go with coffins in bou——"

"Emilie!"

"*Tres bien*, Mademoiselle."

Georgette welcomed the musicians, showed them their places, and took the leader aside for a few instructions. Then, after a final hasty check of the arrangements, she went to meet the first of her guests. They came slowly at first, one or two at a time. As the evening passed, more and more put in their appearances. When the theatres let out at eleven, and every important actor, actress, director, producer, decorator, and musician in town was on hand, the guests were four-thick around the buffet and worse around the bar. The band had lately arrived from America with new and loud arrangements. By 11.30, three ladies had been insulted, two challenges to duels given, and one accepted. The evening was definitely a complete success.

Mademoiselle Georgette Georges did the honours with her usual charm and grace. The most clever detective would never have considered the possibility of her having a coffin in her boudoir; no pyschologist would ever have seen in her a woman about to commit suicide. The gossips, who had come to laugh at the "woman betrayed," had nothing to laugh at. Clearly Georgette didn't have a worry in the world. They forgot that she was the first actress of Paris. Few of them, in fact, would have admitted it.

At a quarter to twelve, Georgette disappeared from their midst, went up to her rooms, and locked the door. Her plans were made, and on the stroke of midnight would come the drum-roll which would be the last sound she would ever hear. She had fifteen minutes to prepare to die. This last evening among the people she had frequented for years left her with no regrets. What use was there in going on living in this misshapen world where every smile is a grimace, where the syrupy compliments are poisoned, where even the oaths of love are no more than conversation?

From a drawer in her writing cabinet she withdrew all of Pedro's letters, cards, notes, photographs, every scrap of paper which connected him with her life. Crossing to the wide fireplace, she struck a match to them, threw them down, watched them

(*Continued on page* 64)

Illustrations by Frank Lea

PEDRO who had killed fifty of Spain's best bulls was not to be stopped by oak panels. He threw himself against the door

(*On left*) A badger quenches his thirst at a woodland stream. The badger's footprints are quite distinctive in the snow, usually showing the whole sole of the foot with broad, oblong pads and five toes

Nature Article

These Winter Days

By B. Melville Nicholas

WHEN the leaves fall from the trees and autumn gives way to winter many people suppose the countryside to have no more attractions to offer until the days lengthen and spring returns to cheer us with more genial weather. But such is not the truth, and those folk who confine their activities to the months when the weather is fine and warm miss some of the greatest joys which Dame Nature has to offer.

True, the dormouse and the hedgehog are sleeping soundly in their winter dormitories, while in barns and belfries the bats have gone into temporary retirement, but other wild folk are very much alive. No matter how severe the weather, birds and animals must forage for their food, and nothing thrills me more than to stroll into the countryside after a snowfall. Early morning is the best time to go and I have often been surprised to find how close the badger and the fox have come to my dwelling. Their footprints are quite distinctive in the snow, those of the badger usually showing the whole sole of the foot with broad, oblong pads and five toes, while the fox's paw mark is smaller and more like that of a dog.

If you follow their trails closely you will discover where they journeyed during the night, and more likely than not the presence of feathers or rabbit skins will indicate what they had for supper.

I RECALL a certain winter's day, when the wind was bitterly cold and the countryside frost-bound, motoring with a friend along a narrow, winding road and suddenly coming face to face with a fox. In its mouth it carried a rabbit and for a second the cunning hunter hesitated as to which way to go; but its hesitation was only momentary before it dashed across the highway, over the hedge and into an adjoining field. Although both my friend and I quickly mounted the hedge in pursuit we saw no more of the crafty Reynard, and if it was not in hiding nearby it must have made good its escape at lightning speed, closely hugging the hedgerow. Foxes are adept at concealment and it is surprising how effectively they take advantage of scanty herbage or race across the countryside with their stomachs almost touching the ground to avoid being detected. They are also adept at catching rabbits; but during the winter many rabbits are caught in steel-toothed gins, and foxes find it quite a simple matter to make a meal of these unfortunate individuals. Needless to say, the trapper is much annoyed at Reynard's interference and although the fox is concerned only with its own needs, it brings a speedy end to many rabbits which otherwise would have suffered for hours in those barbarous steel jaws.

No sound is more pitiful on a winter's night than the piercing screams of a rabbit when the cruel gin snaps round its leg, and Reynard knows in a moment the meaning of that sound. So does the stoat and the weasel, but these little brigands are interested only in sucking the blood of their victims so that even though they reach the imprisoned rabbit sooner than the fox the latter would not be deprived of its supper.

(*On left*) A bank vole pauses in its toilet—did it hear a weasel, the bloodthirsty bandit, approaching?

(*Below*) In winter the song-thrush appreciates any scraps you can give him but is more fond of snails and it is amusing to watch him peering into nooks and crannies in the hope of finding some

STOATS and weasels are active throughout the year and are not deterred by any weather, for I have traced their movements along the hedgerows where snow has lain inches deep. During such severe conditions many birds, weak because of lack of food, fall easy victims to these bloodthirsty bandits. They kill for the sheer joy of killing and very few of our smaller mammals have any effective defence to their attacks. Mice, voles, rats and rabbits are pursued with determined accuracy to the bitter end (*Continued on page* 68)

In My End Is My

A TALL, slender woman, her auburn hair patched and streaked with grey, her thin, high-cheeked face almost as grey as her hair, her angular figure wrapped in a black velvet cloak, and that clutched in her two knuckled, rheumatic hands, so passed Mistress Seton along the corridor. The eyes of the sentries followed her in something that was part pity, part admiration, part awe. She went slowly in at a narrow doorway, let the door fall behind her with a clang, and said aloud: "I am the last, O God. Now let no more suffer for her sake, she for whom all of us were glad to suffer, save one."

Her memories drifted back, as she sat quietly within the silent little room, to a day in Orleans, now some five and twenty years ago; a day of sunlight and blossom and the song of birds, and of tall clouds in a sky of deepest blue, a day on which she, with her three fellow maids-in-waiting, sat in the rose garden beside their nineteen-year-old mistress, that tall, slim narrow-eyed lass in her widow's weeds, Dowager-Queen of France, and Queen of Scotland in her own right, at birth.

"Who comes hither?" had asked Mary Stuart, sliding her long agate-brown eyes around towards a little group of men in the distance, and one of them, it might have been Mary Seton herself, she did not now remember, had answered, "Your Majesty, it is the Earl of Bothwell."

"Which of them is he?" asked the queen.

Illustrations by Steven Spurrier A.R.A.

Mary Livingstone, ever the first to bounce in with her word, answered: "Madame, 'tis he with the dark red pointed beard and the merry laugh, and the eyes that look always to the right of him, where, look you, is generally that which most he desires."

"How?" said the queen. "Why should that which he most desires be ever to the right of him?"

"Because it is ever one step higher that *he* wishes to climb," said Livingstone, with her fat, jolly laugh. She was the eldest of the four Marys who served the queen, a hearty, cheerful wench with a shrewd eye.

The young widowed queen looked long at the figure of the man coming down the pathway between the perfumed beds of roses, their crimson and gold and pearl-white swaying in the summer breeze. He was tall, and broadly formed—in after years he became stout—but he was now a very Adonis, bronzed and red-headed, with laughing eyes, and his white teeth showing in a smile. Mary Beaton smiled, too. "He hath an impudent eye," said she, and Mary Fleming agreed to this, adding. "But I do think he should well know how to kiss."

Mary Seton alone was silent. She looked at the man walking down the path, and thought to herself: Crooked. Crooked as a sailor's reef-knot.

In all the years that followed, she never once found occasion to change her mind on this point.

SEEN down the corridor of years, events seemed to crowd so densely one upon another, that to Mary Seton, sitting now by her narrow window, her cloak still clutched tightly around her it might have been the very next day that she was listening to anxious converse between Livingstone, Fleming, and Beaton although in truth it must have been after an interval of about a week.

"The bold, impudent eyes of him!" cried Livingstone.

"I think he hath taken hold of my lady's heart," said gentle Fleming.

"Neither do I blame her—I!" was Beaton's contribution.

Seton, as usual, said nothing. She only shook her head.

There were meetings in the garden after twilight, there were roses tossed up to the queen's window. Little was said, much looked, much thought. But the Queen-Dowager of France, she who was known in private among the Scottish girls as "the Medici bitch," had little mind for gossip about her widowed daughter-in-law. The Earl of Bothwell received a potent hint to withdraw himself from France. He was no such fool as to disregard it. Life in the sixteenth century was of small account when it stood in the pathway of a royal whim.

To Fleming, therefore, with his practised sensing as to which of the four maids would be most sentimentally likely to sympathize, he preferred a request to be allowed to take his farewell of the queen. He was brought privately to the rose-garden, in the moonless hour of the night, and to him there came a tall, slender, hooded figure, stepping softly over the grass towards the little sun-shelter where he waited.

"You wished to see me, my lord?" she said, in her pretty, half-foreign Scots.

"By my soul and so I do," quoth Bothwell, and impudent, as only that man can be impudent who knows women as he knows his own hornbook, he put up a hand and pulled the hood from her face and hair.

Seton, who had been detailed to keep guard, sitting crouched on the steps of the summer-house, saw him do it, and "O, Jesu!" she nearly cried out, for the hardihood of it. Yet her mistress was silent, standing there with her red-gold hair disordered and lovely, her face pale as the pallor of a new moon; her eyes wide and dark. "I come to take my leave of your Majesty," said Bothwell. "Yet I pray it is but for a season. I return to Scotland in the autumn, where I will pay my homage in the Palace of Holyrood."

"You will, I trust, treat your sovereign with more fitting manners," said the queen, but Seton could hear the laugh in her voice.

"I will not there do what *now* I do," answered Bothwell, and with that he caught her round the waist, drew her close, and kissed her fairly on the mouth. He left her at once, on that, for he was ever an artist who wasted neither a line nor a word. The queen hooded herself, stood quite still for a second,

and then said in a curiously expressionless voice, "Seton."

"Madame?"

"I am a fool, Seton. Come, let us go in."

That was the only word she uttered on the subject. The weeks that followed, with their mounting excitement, over the queen's return to Scotland, and her coronation there, may, or may not, have pushed the memory of Bothwell into the background. "Yet," said Seton to herself as she sat now, pondering, alone, twenty-five years later . . . "I do not so think."

THE next time he came to court was, as he himself had said, at Holyrood. The queen danced with him. There was dancing most nights, for the queen was young, and the court was gay. One of the sour comments of John Knox and his followers at this time was : "Our queen weareth the dule (mourning), but she can dance nightly, dule and all."

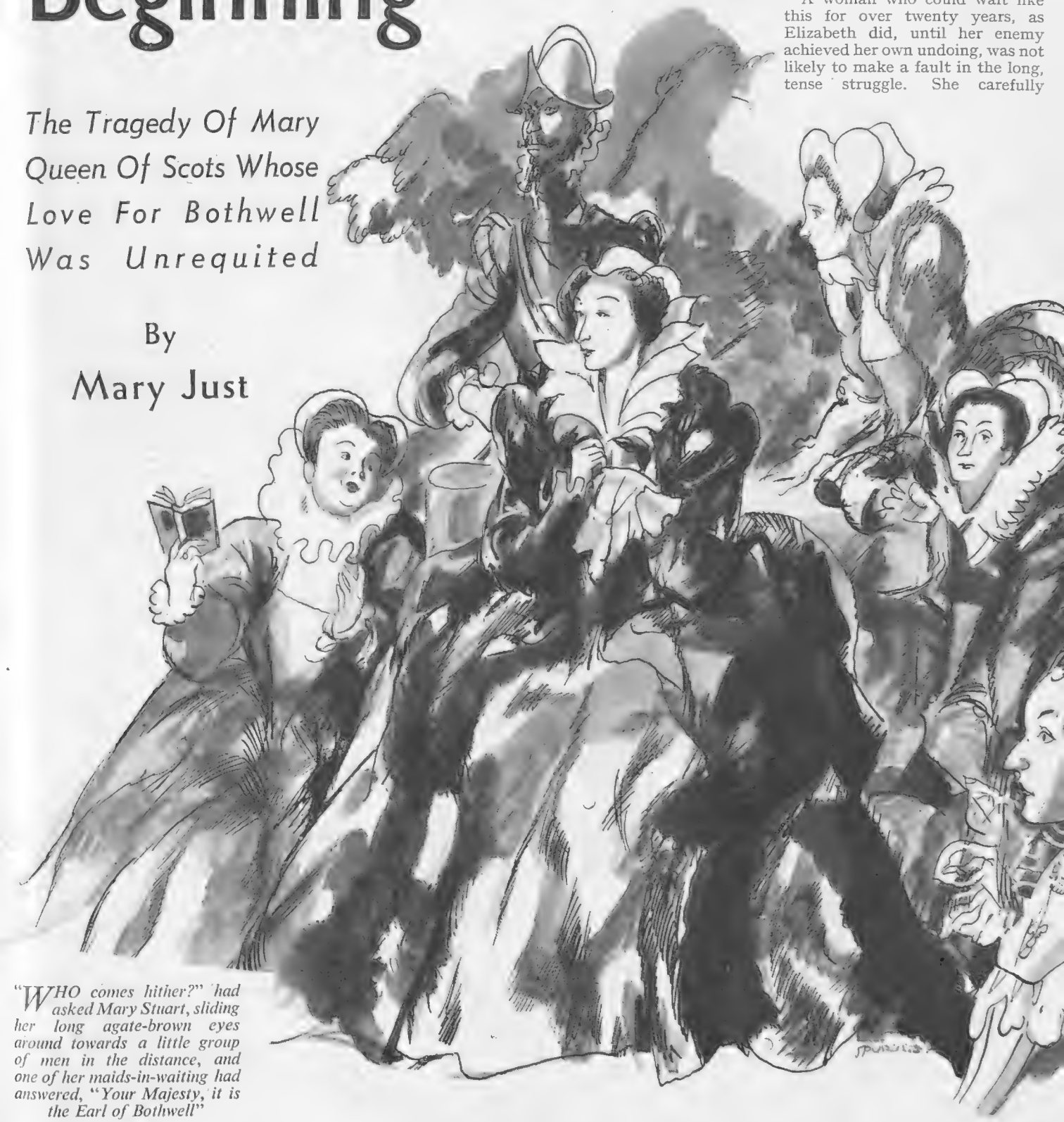
Beginning

The Tragedy Of Mary Queen Of Scots Whose Love For Bothwell Was Unrequited

By

Mary Just

Ever and always her own worst enemy, Mary Queen of Scots invariably alienated those who would have stood by her, at every turn. All the world knows more of her story now. That legend of her irresistible loveliness is an unconscionable time a-dying, but hard facts are hard facts. Women loved her more than men. The dour Scots resented her over-friendliness, they preferred their kings and queens to be aloof and royal, they disliked her Frenchified hand-kissings and wavings. John Knox dubbed her "the Honeypot," and vowed that she dipped her fingers in the honey and held them out for folk to lick. If so, she held them out in vain in that grim, misty grey Scotland to the thin-lipped burghers of Edinburgh. Cold, contemporary record tells us that she was nearly six feet tall, with pale, sandy eyelashes, and narrow eyes that never met your own. Those mythical crowds of lovers were only ambitious men with their eyes on the throne, and she but the step to take towards it. Then, too, she was playing a long match against the arch-schemer of all time, that English Elizabeth who openly declared when urged to attack and capture her Scots cousin . . . "Character is destiny. If you believe this, as I do, my lords, you must give destiny a chance to unfold itself."

A woman who could wait like this for over twenty years, as Elizabeth did, until her enemy achieved her own undoing, was not likely to make a fault in the long, tense struggle. She carefully

"WHO comes hither?" had asked Mary Stuart, sliding her long agate-brown eyes around towards a little group of men in the distance, and one of her maids-in-waiting had answered, "Your Majesty, it is the Earl of Bothwell"

manoeuvred Mary into wedding Lord Darnley in a fit of rage, owing to Elizabeth's own artfully assumed objections, and she calmly waited whilst the unfortunate child (for she was nothing more), floundered deeper and deeper into the mire of her own undoing.

This, *this* was the real tragedy of Mary Queen of Scots, thought Mistress Seton, as she sat there in the cold, still holding her black velvet around her with chilled fingers. Bothwell had never loved her. All he had wanted was the crown of Scotland. So tragedy had followed upon tragedy . . . Kirk o'Field, and the mysterious murder of Darnley—"God in heaven forgive us all," whispered Seton to herself—and then the farcical so-called rape of the queen by Bothwell, with every soul about the court knowing well that it was with the queen's own consent, and the subsequent marriage, to the scandal of all Scotland.

Seton remembered well that marriage-night. She had been on duty, and had undressed the queen and put her to bed. Fleming was by this time married and gone, Livingstone had walked out, stony-faced, on hearing that the queen was to wed the man who was encompassing the ruin of Scotland, Beaton also was wavering. As Seton lit the last of the tall bedside candles, and sat down beside the queen to comb out her lovely hair, Mary Stuart suddenly caught at her hand with a sob.

"He loves me not, Seton," she said in tones of anguish. "He never loved me."

"Nay now, Madame," said Seton, "'tis your wedding night, and he hath no call to wed you, unless that he loves you."

"Is the crown no call?" asked the queen bitterly.

"Think not so, Madame. You love him, and he loves you. He is facing much danger to wed your Majesty, for many of the lords are in high opposition. Have courage and cheer."

"YOU wished to see me, my lord?" said Mary Stuart in her pretty half-foreign Scots. "By my soul and so I do," replied Bothwell and he impudently pulled the hood from her face and hair

So she prattled, as one prattles to a child. "Give me wine," murmured the queen. And when Seton had poured out a glass of shimmering golden liquor, she raised it, crying, "That I may know *one* hour's happiness. *One hour.*"

Then, having drunk, she flung the glass to the ground, where it quivered into glittering fragments. She turned again to Seton, and hid her face on the shoulder of her lady-in-waiting, and her friend.

"O, Seton," she sobbed again, "he never loved me. He will not be true to me for one hour. Have you never loved, Mary . . . never known a broken heart?"

"I love your Majesty," said Seton, in her still, sedate manner. "Though all Scotland fail you, I will not. No Livingstone . . . no Fleming . . . I."

The queen took her hand and held it. "Stay with me until he comes, Mary," she said. "I have the black fear on me to-night. I have taken what was not mine to take, I have sought to turn the ways of God to mine own purposes. What will come to me, God only knoweth. Do not forsake me, Mary."

"I will stay with your Majesty until death shall part us," was Seton's quiet answer.

Bothwell did not make his appearance until nearly two hours later. He had been feasting below with his friends, and when he came he was maudlin drunk. Mary Seton left the two of them, and went, white as a mask of death, to the little chapel below, where she knelt in prayer until morning.

THE pictures were passing before her eyes so quickly now, that she could scarcely dwell on one before another was wringing her heart; the careless indifference of Bothwell to his wife, the growing darkness of threatening civil war, the increasing power of the black Earl of Moray, and at last, the Battle of Langside, at which the queen's forces met those of her bastard brother and suffered headlong defeat. It was while the battle was yet in progress that Bothwell had sought the queen, who, with some of her trusted followers, and the faithful Seton among them, was watching from a nearby hillock of land.

"It is deemed wiser that I should retreat overseas to Denmark, Mary," he said, "therefore am I come to bid you farewell for a space."

"How, my lord? You retreat overseas while the battle is yet in being? So! The tide turns against us, then?"

She looked at him, at the red-faced, paunchy, swaggering wreck of what had once been the heart-breaker of the rose-garden in Orleans, and her eyes and voice grew cold with the coldness of a deep river that shows neither tide nor spray nor foam.

"It was well and kindly thought," she said, "that you should even spare so much time as to say farewell."

The sarcasm stung him for a moment.

"It were wise if your Majesty, too, should take refuge overseas," he said grumblingly. "I am no coward. Caution and care are needful. We are the King and Queen of Scotland."

"*I* am the Queen of Scotland," said Mary Stuart, her head held high. "I know not, by the Mass, my lord, who made you the king. Go your ways to safety."

He came awkwardly towards her, and attempted to put an arm around her. With the other hand he pushed the hood from her head, as he had done five years before in the little (*Continued on page* 66)

It's Their Holiday

CHILDREN are the people that count at Christmas. This is their special celebration, and it is every parent's wish to create an atmosphere which lingers in the memory.

For those with children under their own roof here are some suggestions from one parent to another.

Buy a very small Christmas-tree as well as a big one. Let the children decorate it themselves and spring their own surprise.

Vary the usual custom with gifts; introduce as many surprises as you can think of. The unexpected has a special value.

Tuck a few presents away and organise a treasure hunt for them. Arrange a dip tub. No matter how small and inexpensive the gifts, it is the thrill of discovery and the pleasure of another "event" that matters. Space out the surprises. Keep some of the better ones to the last, when enthusiasm is beginning to flag.

Older children love to go to a pantomime or a circus alone. Tickets for such an outing are always popular presents. An indoor cinema show is a highlight for all ages. You can hire a cinema show to be given at home by experienced operators at quite a moderate cost.

Present-giving is less of a problem this year for those with limited time and money. Stores in London and elsewhere show a bigger variety of well-made toys at reasonable prices than in previous years. Here are some examples.

Doll's house, round about £2; undressed doll, 13s. 10d. (smaller size available); first-size boxing gloves, 42s. 2d.; Meccano sets, rising from 6s. 6d., 10s. 6d., 14s. upwards; a wide range of model and mechanical toys from 3s.; a mechanical train with a set of rails, for less than £1; an indoor swing which fastens on a door for baby, costing 21s. 9d.; well-fitted painting-boxes, round about 7s. 6d., up to super-sizes at 21s.

Younger children are thrilled with what can be called "composite gifts." Last year my own child liked best a dozen bright packets of flower seeds, with a red watering-can and little fork and trowel. Half-a-dozen small presents wrapped up and put in a large box gaily wrapped multiply the fun and excitement of opening parcels.

Don't forget that, if parents are willing, "live" presents always go down well. A guinea-pig, a rabbit, a kitten or a puppy are inexpensive gifts and bring a lot of joy.

For quiet moments have a scrap-book tucked away, in which the youngsters can paste Christmas cards and "souvenirs" of decorations. It will promote peace for the grown-ups and pleasure for the pasters.

Kind To Your Friends And Kind To Your Pocket

It Looks as if the Festive Spirit will be evoked at a Lower Cost this Christmas. These Suggestions will give you Clues to the Less-Expensive Gifts on Offer.

COSMETICS are a necessity of life, but Christmas offers a chance to turn necessity into luxury with toilet perfume, such as Elizabeth Arden's Blue Grass Flower Mist, 17s. 6d., or Coty's Hand Treatment Cream, 6s. 5d. Cyclax Duet Set, 22s. 6d., comprising compact rouge and matching lipstick in all shades, is ideal for the woman who adores elegant trifles in her handbag. Goya's Gardenia perfumes in a de Luxe size is sold at 35s.

THE LITTLE GIFT to keep the flame of friendship alight. Any one of the innumerable beauty preparations which hit the target well below 10s. will delight the girl friends. Three travel-size phials of perfume in a festive Christmas cracker pack for 7s. 6d., by Goya; or a nail-colour wardrobe, 15s. To the woman about town, novel hatpins from 6s. 6d. at Rowland Ward of Piccadilly. From the same shop the house-proud can be delighted with hand-painted tile table-mats, 8s. 6d. each.

LINGERIE is a gift that never goes amiss. The nightdress we photographed is in fine cotton with broiderie Anglais trimming, for a more ambitious gift, £7 2s. Other charming nighties which are not photographed range from 37s. 6d. for art georgette to £5 10s. for pure silk. Camiknickers start at 37s. 6d. for a dainty affair of white georgette and lace, and reach the hand-made, pure silk class as quickly as £3 10s. All at Fenwicks of Bond Street.

HANDS AND FEET are specially well-catered for this year, since fur-lined bootees have come into the Utility category for the first time. The Edwards and Holmes' bootees in the photograph are made in black and several colours, and cost £3 3s. 6d. from Lilley and Skinner branch shops. Cosy corduroy mules combine warmth with elegance from Marshall and Snelgrove, 20s. 4d. The Beaver Lamb utility gloves, 43s. 6d., also from Marshall's, emphasise winter cosiness.

ONE FOR THE HOME. Christmas is as good an excuse as any for giving the home a present. The wooden porridge bowl, 9s. 9d., and spoon, 4s. 6d., and the small, unglazed jug, 3s. 3d., and the large decorated one, 30s., are typical of the range of presents at Heal's Craftsman's Market. The hand-painted biscuit box, metal-lined, from Marshall and Snelgrove, is 13s. 6d.

TO GIVE TO HIM. One of Christmas's most teasing questions. If he has a penchant for animals or the field sports, Rowland Ward's Gift Shop in Piccadilly should supply the answer, with either bottle-openers, pipe-racks like the one photographed, prints or writing equipment, all with an animal life motif. The suède waistcoat, £4 12s. 6d., will appeal to some, a scarf to all, both from Moss Brothers.

NOVELTIES are a special prerogative of Yuletide. The jaunty cocktail-bar cigarette-case, 38s. 2d., automatically delivers a cigarette as required. This, and the Addis Hair Brush photographed, are both from Selfridges. The Mirlip mirror lipstick-holder is from Fenwicks, £1 1s.

Hands And Feet

To Give To Him

The Little Gift

One For The Home

Lingerie

Cosmetics

Novelties

Fast-To-Knit Bed-Jacket

MATERIALS : 15 ozs. of Sirdar "Fast-To-Knit" ; one pair of No. 2 knitting needles ; 3½ yards of 1-in. wide ribbon for binding ; 1¼ yards of 2-in. wide ribbon for neck ; No. 10 crochet hook.

MEASUREMENTS : (after pressing) Length from the shoulder to lower edge, 20 ins. ; width all round underarms, 40 ins. ; length from the top of shoulder to lower edge, 24 ins.

TENSION : 4 sts. to 1 in.

THE BACK

With No. 2 needles cast on 78 sts. Knit 2 rows garter stitch. Work in the following pattern :

1st row.—* K. 1, m. 1, k. 2 tog. Repeat from * to end of row.

2nd row.—As 1st row.

3rd row.—Knit.

4th row.—Purl. These 4 rows form pattern.

Continue in pattern for 4 ins. Then dec. 1 stitch each end of the next and every 6th row until 69 sts. Work on these sts. until work measures 14 ins. from the cast-on edge.

SHAPE ARMHOLES

Cast off 3 sts. at the beg. of the next 6 rows (51 sts.). Then dec. 1 stitch each end of every row until 45 sts. remain. Continue until armhole measures 7½ ins.

SHAPE SHOULDERS

Cast off 5 sts. at the beg. of the next 6 rows. Cast off the remaining sts. for the back of neck.

RIGHT FRONT

With No. 2 needles cast on 45 sts. Knit 2 rows garter st. Then work in main pattern, but keeping 3 sts. at the front edge in garter stitch.

(*Continued on page* 70)

Small Size Cable Cardigan

MATERIALS : 8 ozs. of "La Laine" Super-Fingering 3-ply ; one pair each of No. 12 and 9 knitting needles and a small cable needle, pointed at both ends ; 7 buttons.

MEASUREMENTS : Bust, 32 ins. ; length, 19½ ins. ; sleeve, 18½ ins.

TENSION : 7½ sts. to 1 in.

THE BACK

With No. 9 needles cast on 122 sts. Work 4 rows k. 1, p. 1 rib. Change to ptn.

1st row.—K. 1, * cable 4 back, k. 4, repeat from * ending k. 5.

2nd and every alternate row.—K. 1, p. to last st., k. 1.

3rd and 7th rows.—K.

5th row.—K. 5, * cable 4 front, k. 4, repeat from * ending k. 1.

8th row.—As 2nd row. Repeat these 8 rows, dec. 1 st. at both ends of next and every 4th row 8 times (106). Work 3 rows after last dec.

SHAPE WAIST

Change to No. 12 needles. Work 8 rows in k. 1, p. 1 rib. Change back to No. 9 needles and ptn., inc. 1 stitch at both ends of 9th and every 8th row 9 times (124). Continue until 9½ ins. from top of waist rib.

SHAPE ARMHOLES

Cast off 3 on next 8 rows (100) ; dec. 1 stitch at both ends of next alt. row (98) and continue until work is 5½ ins. deep, measured on the straight, from start of armhole shaping.

(*Continued on page* 70)

ABBREVIATIONS : *K.=knit ; p.=purl ; sts.=stitches ; ptn.=pattern ; sl.=slip ; cable 4 front=sl. next 2 to cable needle and leave at front of work, k. 2, k. the 2 from cable needle ; cable 4 back=sl. 2 to cable needle and leave behind work, k. 2, k. the 2 from cable needle ; rep.=repeat ; inc.=increase or increasing ; dec.=decrease or decreasing ; alt.=alternate ; tog.=together ; beg.=beginning ; m.=make.*

Inexpensive "Evenings"

Particulars of where these dresses can be obtained in London will be sent on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope to Women's Department, "Britannia and Eve," 1, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1.

(Top left.) Black chiffon off-shoulder evening blouse. The shoulder frill is dotted with gold stars. Price 53s. To wear with any long skirt.

(Centre.) Black taffeta semi-evening with a wide circular skirt. Linzi model. Price approximately 85s. 3d.

(Lower left.) Susan Small's delicious and youthful black net is £5. Sleeves and skirt have velvet bows. The underslip, which is optional, is extra.

(Right.) Pastel moss crepe full-length dinner dress with corselet waistline and the new "mushroom" sleeve. Linzi model. Price 68s. 10d.

IN PRAISE of Witches

Which goes to show that a little witchcraft is as helpful and as easy to get away with as it ever was.

ANYONE can see that, however outward appearances may change, witches are as numerous as ever they were. You can tell them by their nylons; you can see them any day practising their black art at the butcher's; a little more clothes-conscious than formerly, perhaps, but there they are, larger than life and twice as amusing.

Things being what they are, women are being more and more forced back upon the resources of witchcraft, and who can blame them? When mortal methods fail, whether in the endeavour to get a little extra on the rations or to make one pound sterling go as far as three, sorcery is the only and obvious way.

The trouble with witchcraft is that it is, and always has been, a closed shop. Witches of old kept their own counsel. So do contemporary ones; the result being that women who are so slow as to have got left out of the Charmed Assembly are found gaping while the witches snatch the plums from under their noses.

This is a very sad state of affairs. Sadder by far to-day when the Witch-Next-Door can, by the practice of demonolatory, extract an extra half-pint from the milkman, with the result that there is less for you, whereas her respected ancestress would have been content merely with changing him into a toad, which at least leaves you all square with the milk.

BUT there is no point whatever in taking up a censorious attitude about witches just because the secret of the snares they set don't happen to come our way. Nor is there any real sense in fearing them. "Drugged powders, wands, ointments and Various Venoms" notwithstanding, the important thing is to get to close quarters with these girls if you want to share their secrets. Watch them at work; strip some of the abracadabra from the situation and you will find that, after all, witches are not much more than very shrewd people.

Anybody will tell you that they were among the very first psychologists. In fact, their entire build-up was based on an unshakable faith in human gullibility. They it was who discovered that people are very ready to believe anything you say, and to do almost anything you tell them to do so long as you convince them that you are cleverer than they, irrespective of the truth of the claim. Thus it was that, in the heyday of witchcraft, you dolled yourself up with a broomstick, pronounced your pet pieces of jibberish and, whilst generally conducting yourself in a rather anti-social fashion to attract

attention, proceeded to start a rumour that you were possessed of supernatural powers. In the spreading of your story you were at once aided and abetted by the many people who were then, as now, only too ready to spread a bit of gossip and enthusiastic in adding little personal touches *en passant*. It was all so easy that, before you had collected enough three-legged albino mice to render down for love-potions, you were a success.

So it is to-day. We may think what we like about progress, but human psychology changes hardly at all, and witches know it. So, although the broomstick may have been exchanged for the very latest in long umbrellas, the potential sorceress must proceed along much the same lines, with only this difference: in deference to the cherished (but quite erroneous) conviction of the modern victim that he or she cannot be fooled, you adopt a slightly less theatrical demeanour, at the same time steering well clear of shabbiness, because that doesn't pay any more. In contrast to her ancestor witches, your modern sorcerers know that appearances count.

IF you need further proof that early witches were good at their psychology, remember that it was they who first brought to light the interesting fact that men, who have so long advertised themselves as the dominant characters of the human species, are, in reality, only completely happy when, in fact, they are being dominated by some woman. Having unearthed this truth, Witch Circles at once proceeded to devise a spell by means of which this satisfactory state of domestic felicity could be achieved and maintained without the male party losing face. This problem was met by the satisfactory expedient of concealing from him that anything at all was happening.

This particular piece of sorcery was so successful and started so many branches throughout the world that it still remains one of the best-loved spells known to the trade. Any student can see it demonstrated by graduate witches almost anywhere to this day.

THE moral of it all for women who find that others are getting away with murder while they themselves stand in the background wondering what particular form of abracadabra is being used to snatch the plums, is that the mystery about witches is all dust in the eye. The facts are that, though one may be quite understandably impatient and sometimes fearful of women who appear to have all the advantages, they are often quite praiseworthy people who have merely taken a great deal of trouble to learn more of the answers. As it is with the woman who is always a little better dressed; a little more successful with people; a little quicker at snatching an advantage than you are yourself, the answer is not in the employment of black magic, but in sheer efficiency. Nothing comes to us in this world without work, and this includes a good appearance as well as social success. To be a success as a person, as a home-maker or as a career woman, you have to study your subject. When your knowledge and your experience improves and you achieve your first successes, others will look on in amazement and envy and call it sorcery. At this stage you will be in a position to smile complacently and encourage them in the flattering assumption that you have supernatural gifts. So if you aim to polish up your witchcraft, bear in mind that the modern version of a spellbinder is one who is a little more charming, a little quicker in the uptake, and a little more analytical of the other person's thought-processes than some of us bother to be.

Witches cannot be faint-hearted. They believe in themselves. They have a bad name conferred upon them by other women less shrewd, and by men who fear anything in the nature of a competitive intellect. Witches encourage the impeachment, knowing full well that to be feared is half the battle to getting away with it, whether or not, behind the smoke-screen, they are perfectly nice people.

In any case, for those who hesitate to try their hand at witchcraft, remember that, whereas in the past the penalty for discovery in the black arts was ceremonial enthronement on a bonfire, the worst to be feared to-day is the possession of a few more nylons than the next person.

MARY ANDREW SMITH.

Seen in Passing

Valerie Burke brings more news from the shopping front. If you would like further details of any item mentioned by her, write, enclosing a stamped and addressed envelope, to The Editor, Women's Department, " Britannia and Eve," 1, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1.

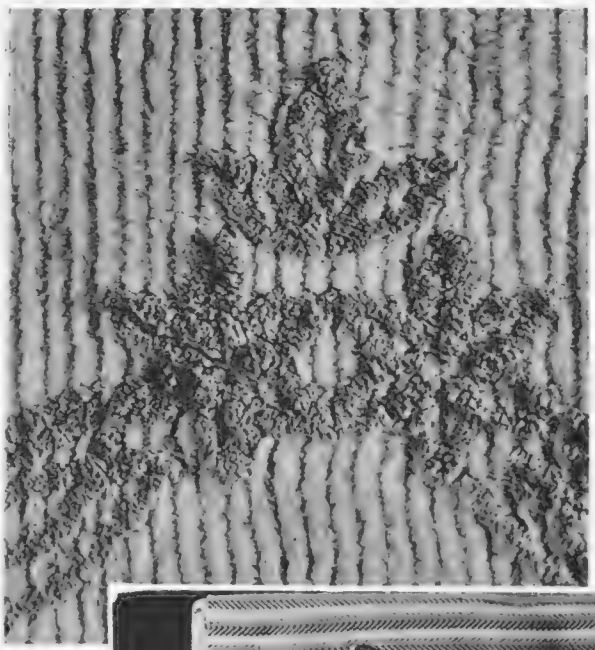
THOSE who like to see hand-made articles around the house—especially when they are little more expensive than their machine-made counterparts—will be interested to hear of the Craftsman's Market. The selection of wares photographed below gives some idea of the market's permanent stocks. The slipware figure and the pottery vase are rather expensive specimens of the studio potter's art, but less decorative pieces such as brown earthenware water pitchers and pipkins can be bought from 3s. 6d. upwards.

The firescreen, hand-wrought in a Kentish smithy by Ernest Joyce, is £7 10s., and the furnishing tweed, 36 ins. wide, hand-woven by Jean Finn, is 30s. a yard. Other fabrics can be woven or hand-printed to buyer's own special requirements.

Wooden porridge bowls, 9s., and wooden spoons, 4s. 6d., besom brushes, 3s. 3d., and oak spale baskets, 11s. 9d., which can be turned to good use as log baskets, vegetable baskets, or even the pet's basket, are examples of traditional craftsmanship which can still be of practical value in the modern home.

CANDLEWICK has made a welcome return to the shops. Cosy yet dainty to wear, easy to wash and hard-wearing, the candlewick dressing-gowns which came from America in pre-war days were deservedly popular. Now candlewick is being made in Wales for the home market.

The detail photograph below gives some idea of the soft, chenille-tufted fabric. As it doesn't require ironing, candlewick is ideal for nursery rugs and mats as well as dressing-gowns, bedspreads and bedside rugs. The bedspreads are made in several designs in a wide range of lovely colour combinations, single sizes from £7 4s. 5d., double from £7 19s. 5d. Children's dressing-gowns are £2 10s. to £3 7s. 6d., according to size, and women's housecoats from £4 19s. 6d. Nursery rugs, £1 15s. and bedside rugs £4 5s.



A MODEL blouse, made to measure for 25s., is a useful service offered by a London firm. There are seven charming model designs to choose from, including a tailored shirt and blouses for evening wear. If you can pick up a remnant or choose a model taking less than 2 yards of material, there will be a saving in coupons too. All you have to do is to send off the required amount of material with details of measurements and the blouse of your choice is delivered post free within ten days. Buttons and trimmings are included in the 25s.

LASTEX yarn has revolutionised foundation garments, transforming what used to be a severely functional item of the wardrobe into something dainty and attractive. Lastex combines perfect support and fit, with the necessary " give " for health and comfort, and its elasticity will endure through innumerable launderings. Dainty models available include a pantie girdle, 3 guineas; and a " Waspie " corset belt, £2 10s.

Fit To Wear

Good news for the not-quite-stock-size figure comes from one of the large London stores who have adopted a new series of stock fittings, even more comprehensive than the American size plans we have so long envied. The five main fittings are based on height, and each fitting is subdivided again according to bust, hip and neck to waist measurements, making 38 graded sizes in all.

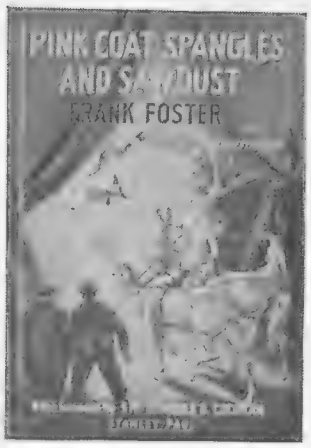
This style-by-size plan ensures that the character of their tailor-mades is not lost by drastic alterations and will be a boon to all who, until now, have had difficulty in buying ready-made coats and suits of good fit.

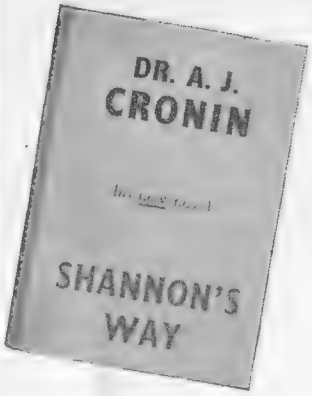
In the Model Department of another London stores the taller-than-average woman is specially catered for. Besides suits and coats, they have also a good range of lovely evening and cocktail dresses.

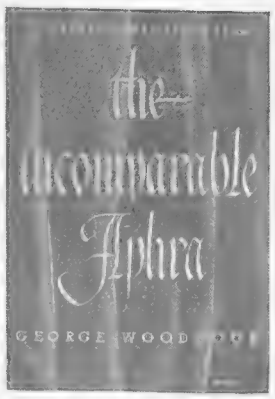
Books:

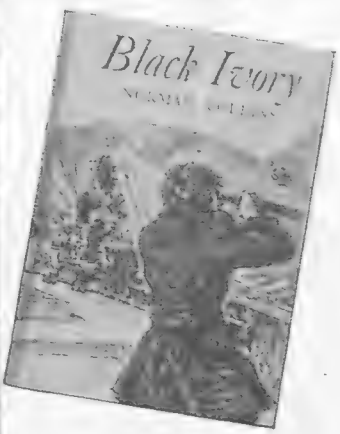
Reviewed by

Trevor Allen









WHEN we pack the Christmas circus with its daring thrills and glitter we think: Wonderful people! How did they begin? What are their private lives? What dramas and escapes have they experienced? What happens when there's a fire or wild animals break loose? What are the stories behind great showmen like the Sangers and Mills? Mr. Frank Foster's "Pink Coat, Spangles and Sawdust" (Stanley Paul, 21s.) is a top-line circus autobiography because it answers these questions and takes us behind the scenes of a life lived on the tan and sawdust as performer and ringmaster. He had jolted 400 miles pent up in a rail truck with half-crazed elephants, fought fires, tackled wild beasts amok, been trailed by detectives as a suspected murderer. But the book is also admirable for its presentation of the human side of circus personalities. I place it alongside Willson Disher's *The Greatest Show on Earth* as one of the best ever written.

It will increase our circus pleasure this Christmas tenfold, for we will know what goes on outside the Big Top as well as in.

APHRA BEHN was the first woman to earn her living by writing at a time when the craft was a monopoly of men. Daughter of a Kent barber—though her origin was vague—she was taken to Surinam, now Dutch Guiana, as a girl, and out of the experience came her anti-slavery story *Oroonoko*, precursor of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. She married a Dutchman, became a secret agent in Holland, returned penniless, was thrown into a debtors' prison, then wrote Restoration plays which drew from Pope the couplet: 'The stage how loosely does Astrea tread, Who safely puts all characters to bed." Mr. George Woodcock's biography "The Incomparable Aphra" (Boardman, 12s. 6d.) is therefore not of a blue-stocking but of a vital woman who lived intensely, enjoyed illustrious company, and held her own with the seventeenth-century wits. Women to-day may salute her as a pioneer and not mind the bed, which was a Restoration hobby.

IN British tradition there is a goodly crop of folk heroes historic or legendary: King Arthur, Robin Hood, St. George, St. Thomas of Canterbury, Herne the Hunter, St. Oswald, and a host of others. Probing their lore and origins in "English Folk Heroes" (Batsford, 10s. 6d.) Miss Christina Hole writes that "all are either known to be authentic historical characters, or are people who may reasonably be supposed to have existed, in spite of the dense fog of magic or of miracle which has gathered round them in the course of centuries." It is a shock to find Robin Hood and Maid Marian among the doubtfuls, but that even applies to some of the saints. Miss Hole is very learned and researchful; Eric King's woodcuts catch the dim dark-age spirit.

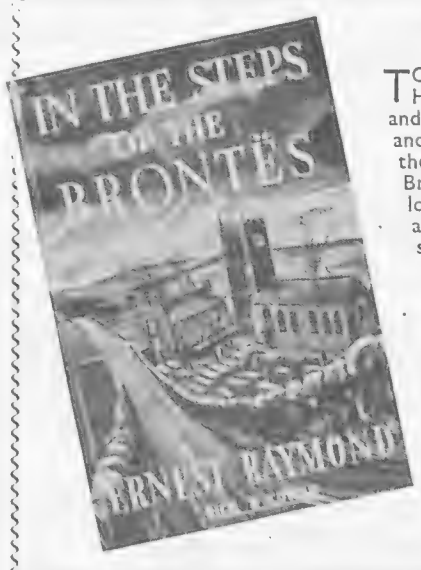
ARE Sweeney Todd, Deadwood Dick, Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, Dick Barton folk heroes? In a way, perhaps—yes, for generations of juniors. Parading them and other "penny blood" prodigies in "Boys Will Be Boys" (Michael Joseph, 10s. 6d.), Mr. E. S. Turner tells us that since 1893 some 200,000,000 words have been turned out by various hands on Sexton Blake stories alone. I heard of one who went regularly to Wormwood Scrubs because he had a conscientious objection to paying income tax. (Who hasn't?) He took his typewriter, churned out the stuff in prison, and it was collected by editor's messenger. Mr. Turner writes with gusto, includes old illustrations. His history will divert boys who are still boys and those who've grown up but feel nostalgic about the *Marvels* and *Union Jacks* of long ago.

ANOTHER Batsford (7s. 6d.) with drawings by S. R. Badmin is Mr. James Lees-Milne's "National Trust Guide: Buildings" describing the history and architectural features of more than one hundred.

A GOOD Christmas novel for those who enjoyed Dr. A. J. Cronin's *The Citadel* is his "Shannon's Way" (Gollancz, 10s. 6d.) which portrays the research struggles of a young Catholic doctor and his love for a girl student and colleague who is alienated from him by a narrow Calvinistic upbringing. Apart from the characterization and spiritual conflict, I enjoyed this story for its revelations of the under-side of university "lab" and hospital life.

MISS VICKI BAUM may sometimes overload her stories but she has a genius for carrying the reader along with her. "Headless Angel" (Michael Joseph, 10s. 6d.) is the romance of the Countess Driesen who left a tame husband at Weimar to run off to Mexico with a Spanish adventurer in the early 1800s and find danger and tragedy (*Cont. on page 72*)

The Brontës Revisited



TO visit all the Brontë places from Thornton and Haworth to Brussels, describe them as they are now and as they were, recall the significant happenings there and the links with *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and the other novels—what a fascinating pilgrimage for the Brontë-lovers! To find Thornton, for example, no longer a small village of hand-loom weavers but almost a suburb of industrial Bradford, and behind a butcher's shop the room in which Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne were born. . . .

Mr. Ernest Raymond follows so devotedly **"In the Steps of the Brontës"** (Rich & Cowan, 12s. 6d.) that he re-creates their lives, characters, backgrounds with almost psychic sympathy. Every novelist, he thinks, craves to write one book about them because "he thinks that he understands them as only a brother can, and, being by trade a novelist, can tell their tale in all its comedy, tragedy, and triumph, with a virtuosity above that of far profounder scholars and critics." The book has exactly that quality of a real-life novel without being in any way fictionized. There are new sepia photographs of the haunts visited.

In Search of Glamour

By Jane Gordon

IT seems to me that social activities are much harder on a woman's good looks than a full day's work and of all forms of entertainment the wear and tear of a card party is the worst. Many months ago I wrote about the anti-glamorous effects of card playing. For weeks my friends referred to me as the "blackleg" and every time I found myself at a card table my partner or my opponent reproached me for my catty remarks. It has taken me a long time to pluck up enough courage to refer to this subject again. I intend to do so now and I hope this time I shall at least be able to assume the rôle of a helpful and sympathetic blackleg, searching for glamour at the card table.

THE most popular afternoon card games for women are undoubtedly bridge and gin rummy and of these two gin rummy causes more strain on the eyes and requires more concentration than bridge. A great many women who play cards wear reading spectacles while doing so and women are apt to be extremely careless with their spectacles unless they wear them all the time. Nothing is worse for the eyes than smeary or scratched glasses. If you are going out to a card game make absolutely certain that your glasses are clean and polished before you start. Most glasses are concave and if you place them face downwards they will become scratched. Scratched glasses will damage your eyesight quicker than anything else and the money spent on new glass lenses cost practically nothing compared with good tortoiseshell frames, yet few women think of having their lenses replaced as frequently as they should.

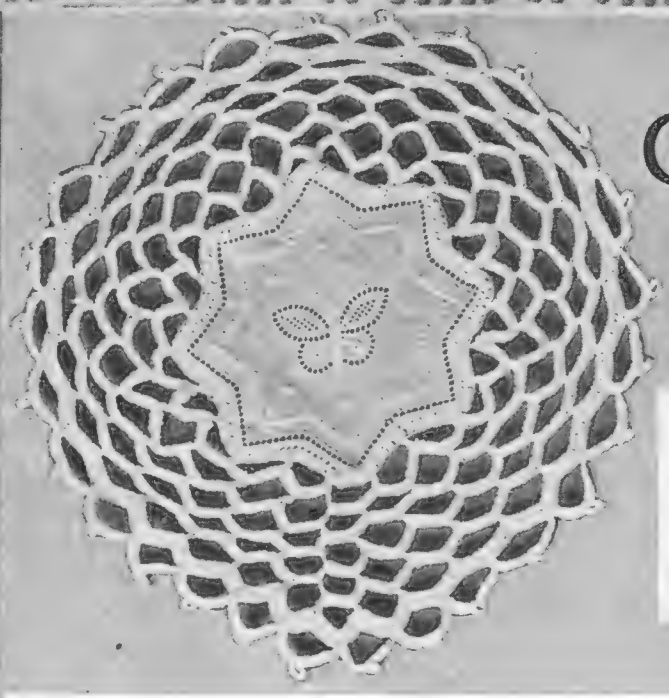
A woman who has played cards during the afternoon and is going to play again during the evening should give her eyes at least a quarter of an hour's rest cure and treatment before dinner. You can rest the eyes by giving them a hot and cold tap treatment. All that you need is a large pad of cotton-wool or a sponge. Turn on both the hot and cold tap, wring your sponge under the hot tap first, hold to your eyes and alternate with the cold. Do this twelve times for each eye followed by an eye bath with Optrex and if you have time, wring out two pads of cotton-wool in Optrex and lie down for a quarter of an hour, with a pad on each eye.

THE quickest and most restful eye exercise is "cupping." This is also a good treatment for crow's feet, lines, hollows and puffs under the eyes. It is done this way : Close the eyes and lightly place the hands in a cupped position over the eyes. Gently press against the eyeball so that you see black. Raise the whole eye and draw slightly outward. As you remove hands open eyes for a few seconds. Repeat ten times. Stretch eyes and close for pouches beneath eyes : Close eye and draw first finger over the eyeball from the nose to the outer corner with slight pressure, elongating eye. Relax, open eye, repeat ten times with each eye.

No one will look at your face while playing cards and a shiny nose or lack of lipstick will pass completely unnoticed, but your hands and nails are bound to draw attention while you are dealing the cards. Chipped nail enamel is more obvious at the card table than it is anywhere else. If you have no time to re-enamel your nails it is far wiser to remove it all and rely on a colourless base such as the Peggy Sage Satin Base.. This is foolproof to apply and dries in half a minute. You can whiten your nails with peroxide. A little twist of cotton-wool round the ends of an orange stick dipped in peroxide will bring the nails up white as a sheet and if you are a heavy smoker you will probably need one of the preparations which remove nicotine stains. You can buy these at any chemist.

WOMEN who enjoy playing cards should always keep a hand lotion near their washbasin and never forget to apply a few drops of hand lotion when they have dried their hands after washing them. For women, hand massage is far more important than face massage. It is done quite simply by smearing on a good face cream and smoothing one hand with the finger of the other from the tip of the finger up to the wrist. When this has been done for a few minutes, put the elbow of the hand you are treating on the table, holding the fingers upwards and massage the hands as if you were pulling on very tight gloves from the fingers right down to the wrist, after which you should pull the fingers in a straight line as if you were trying to separate the joints. The finger tip to wrist massage makes the hand very white and the pulling of the fingers helps to prevent knobbly knuckles.

When you are inviting people to play cards with you, take the trouble to see that the pencils you provide are sharpened. It is extraordinary how few women do this. Rub your card table over with a clean duster and you will be surprised how much dust comes out. Plush and baize card (*Continued on page* 66)



Clever With Crochet

Anyone who can crochet can make a set of table mats or this delicate cuffs and collar set which combine lawn embroidery and crochet. A centre motif is used for the mats and ¾ yds. of insertion for the collar set. Other materials needed are Coats' Mercer cotton No. 40 and a No. 5 hook

TABLE MAT

1st round.—Trim the lawn medallion to the hemstitching and work 1 d.c. into each hole.

2nd round.—2 d.c. into each d.c.

3rd round.—* 9 ch., miss 4 d.c., 1 d.c. into the next d.c. ; rep. from *.

4th round.—* 11 d.c. into each loop; rep. from *.

5th round.—* 9 ch., 1 d.c. into the 6th d.c. ; rep. from * all round.

6th round.—* 11 d.c. into each loop ; rep. from *. Rep. 5th and 6th rounds 4 times.

Edging.—* 6 d.c. into the first loop, 6 d.c. into next loop, 9 ch., turn these back, fasten with 1 d.c. into the 6th d.c. of first loop, turn, work 6 d.c., 6 ch., 6 d.c. into top loop ; rep. from * all round. Fasten off.

The mat can be made to any required size by increasing each loop by 2 ch. and 2 d.c. every 10th row. Thus the 15th round would be * 11 ch., 1 d.c. into 7th d.c. ; rep. from *. The **16th round.**—* 13 d.c. into each loop, rep. from *.

COLLAR

Cut and trim 14 in. of insertion. Work 2 d.c. into each hemstitch hole.

1st row.—3 ch., 2 tr. into the next 2 d.c., 1 ch., * miss 1 d.c., 2 tr. into the next d.c. ; rep. from * to the last 2 d.c., 2 tr. into the last 2 d.c., 3 ch., turn.

2nd row.—2 tr. over the first 2 tr., * 2 ch., 1 tr. over the next 2 spaces (made by 1 ch., 1 tr. in the previous row), 2 ch., 2 tr., 2 ch., 2 tr., all into the next space of 1 ch. (in previous row,; rep. from * to end of row, ending 2 tr., 3 ch., turn.

3rd row.—2 tr. over the first 2 tr., * 2 ch., 1 tr. over the next tr., 2 ch., 2 tr., 2 ch., 2 tr. all into the next space, 2 ch., 2 tr., 2 ch., 2 tr. into the next space, 2 ch., 2 tr., 2 ch., 2 tr. into the next space ; rep. from * to the last 2 tr., 2 tr., 3 ch., turn.

Rep. 3rd row 7 times and fasten off. Work 2 d.c. into each space into the other edge of insertion.

CUFFS

Cut and trim insertion 7 in. in length.

Work 2 d.c. into each hemstitch hole.

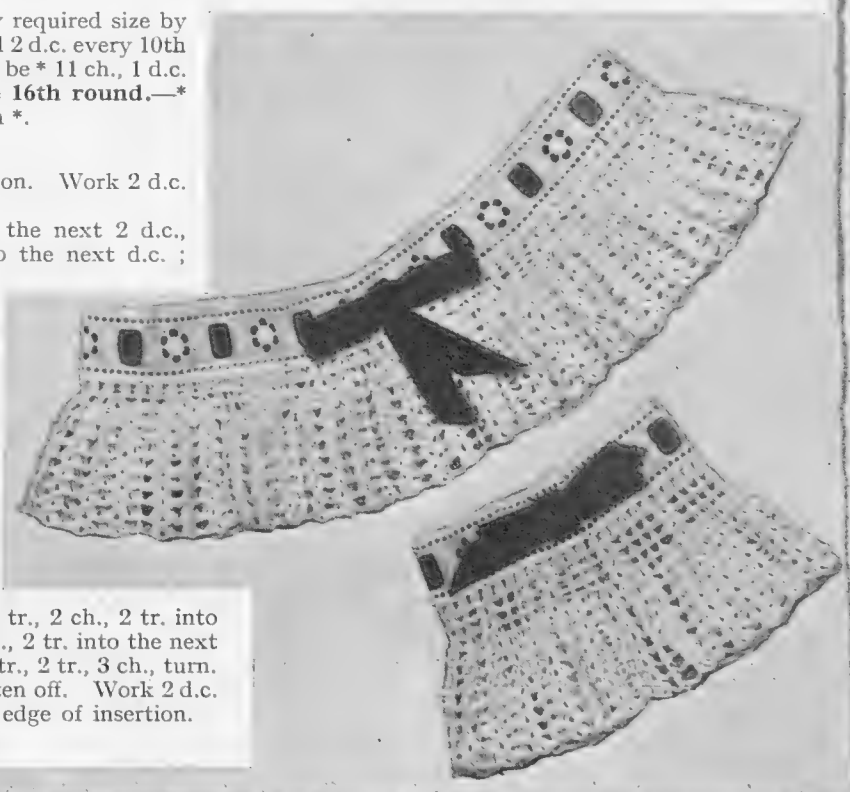
1st and 2nd row as for the collar. Rep. 2nd row twice more.

Work 3rd row as for collar.

Rep. 3rd row 7 times more. Fasten off.

Work 2 d.c. into each hole of the other edge of insertion.

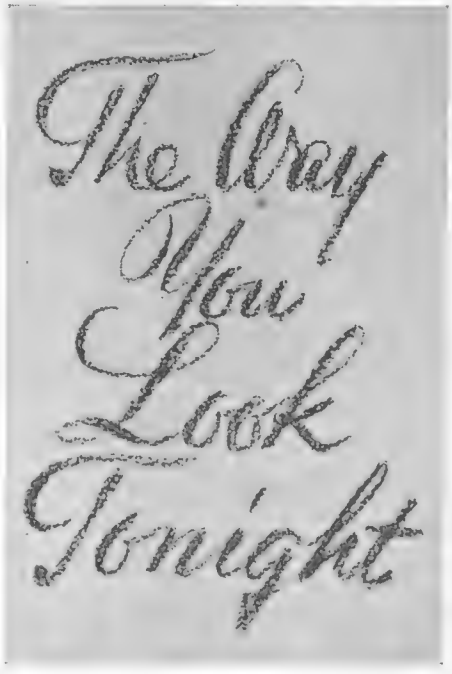
Turn in each end of cuff insertion and sew down neatly. Thread in ribbon and sew ends down at the back. Make small bows and stitch on the front of insertion. Finish the collar in the same way. Sew small press studs on each cuff to fasten, also on to the back of insertion of collar.



THERE will be special dates this Christmas. Your frock is ready; your hair has been clipped to a short short; you have collected your accessories, probably among them a new trinket, some gloves or stockings out of the Christmas Bag. The current atmosphere of festivity imparts its special glow. It is up to you now by careful grooming and a perfect make-up to put the final touches to your good looks for The Night.

Before you dress for the evening take a bath, delicately scented perhaps with an essence to match your perfume.

While you are in the bath massage a good skin food into your face. Afterwards, lie down for half an hour, close your eyes and relax. If you have had a tiring day soak a handkerchief in cologne and lay it across your eyes. Be absolutely still and when you get up to complete your dressing you will find yourself wonderfully refreshed and twice as good looking. Remove the remaining skinfood with astringent lotion, leaving no trace of grease.



Make-up for the evening should be a little different from that which you use in daylight. It can be a little heavier with a subtler emphasis on colour. A lighter shade of the powder than you normally use is essential and a little more rouge is permissible unless you tend to flush with excitement or in a heated atmosphere. In this case go very sparingly with rouge.

Use a foundation, cream, cake or liquid as you prefer, as near your natural colour tint as possible, then blend the rouge with the fingers from the cheek bone towards the hairline and outer cheek. Choose a shade to harmonize with your lipstick and varnish.

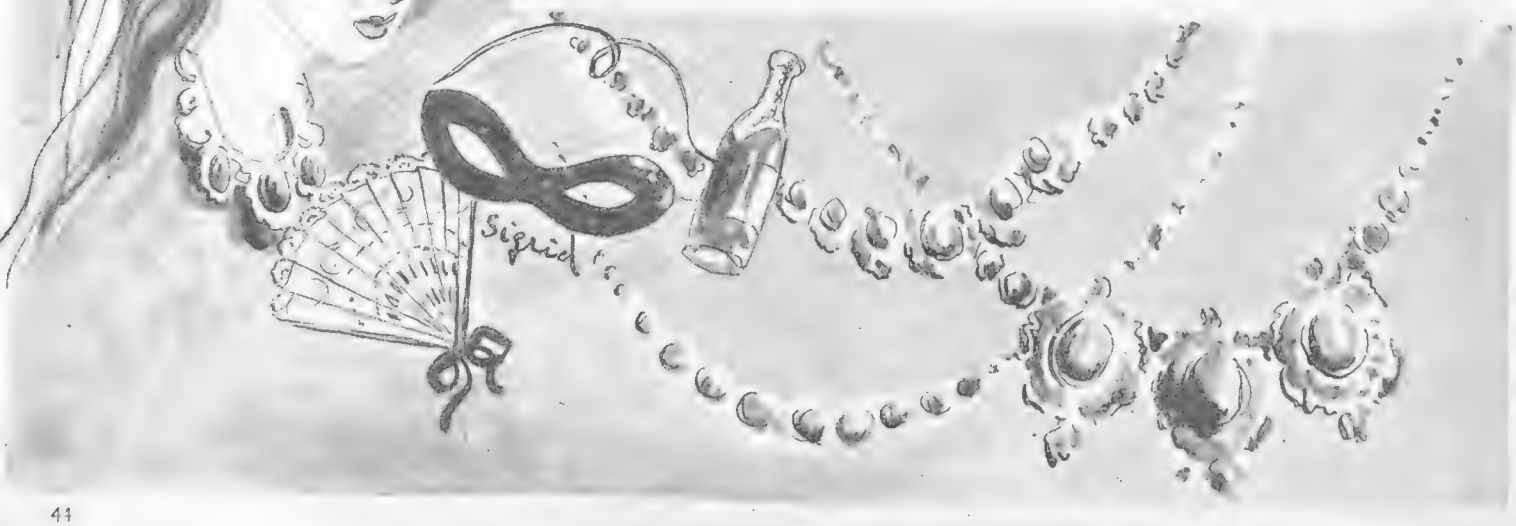
Lipstick should be brighter for electric light demands colours of more depth and brilliance. Two, specially prepared for night make-up by a famous cosmetician go by the intriguing names of Ballet Pink and Precious Ruby. The first named is a vivid pink with a blue tone; the second a very dark red. Remember, too, that a lip brush or lip pencil is an excellent medium for your lips at night.

When applying lipstick tense your mouth and widen it, then apply the colouring. This is a better way than following the outline of the mouth and avoids any possibility of overstepping the natural outline. However much you wish to improve upon the mouth that Nature has given you, do not be tempted to make a false outline. It is hard and always unconvincing.

Black mascara is effective at night. Give your lashes two coats and then, when dry, finish with a light coat of Vaseline as this will give them a gleam. A little eyeshadow is permissible for artificial light but use it very sparingly. Put mascara on after your make-up is done to avoid getting a dusting of powder on your lashes. Take a small brush and smooth it over the eyebrows, using the smallest touch of Vaseline to give them a gloss. You will already have removed straggling hairs with the tweezers, keeping as near as possible to the natural outline.

The importance of having powder carefully selected for your colouring cannot be over emphasized. Each individual skin has its own subtle tints and astonishing improvements can be wrought by the use of powder which is expertly blended to emphasize your colouring. At the same time the powder you use for artificial light should be a little paler, and it is wise to have both kinds while you are about it. All good cosmeticians will willingly give advice as to the perfect powder tone for your individual colouring. Many of them will mix a special blend. Don't depend upon your own judgment in this matter. It takes a trained eye to detect the subtleties of skin colouring.

Individual skin colourings vary so much that it is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules, but the following table of cosmetic colours should be helpful in making you look your loveliest at Christmas parties.



Fair skin, blue eyes

Powder : Pomeroy's English Rose.

Lipstick and rouge : with blues, Yardley's Pink Heather. With orange tones, Dorothy Gray's Paint Red. With neutral shades, Elizabeth Arden's Desert Pink.

Mascara : Dorothy Gray's Midnight Blue.

Eye shadow : Dorothy Gray's Iridescent Sky Blue or clear Pastel Blue.

Sallow skin, brown eyes

Powder : Coty's Tianda.

Lipstick and rouge : with blues, Coty's Cassis. With orange tones, Dorothy Gray's Nut Brown Red. With neutral shades, Cyclax Brunette.

Mascara : Elizabeth Arden's Dark Brown.

Eyeshadow : Elizabeth Arden's Bronze.

Mid complexion, hazel eyes

Powder : Elizabeth Arden's Lysetta.

Lipstick and rouge : with blues, Gala's Ballet Pink. With orange tones, Pomeroy's Russett. With neutral shades, Dorothy Gray's Siren.

Mascara : Max Factor's Brownish-black.

Eyeshadow : Gala's Sea Green.

White hair, clear complexion, blue eyes

Powder : Cyclax Naturelle.

Lipstick and rouge : With blues, Gala's Cyclamen. With orange tones, Elizabeth Arden's Burnt Sugar. With neutral shades, Cyclax English Rose.

Mascara : Gala's Blue.

Eyeshadow : Gala's Grey Mist.

HEALTH AND BEAUTY BY CHRYSIS

If you want help with your beauty problems, write to me at "Britannia and Eve," Commonwealth House, 1 New Oxford Street, W.C.1, enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope.

THERE was seldom a time when so many people were complaining of "nerves." It is a loose term, but widely used to describe that jaded condition into which so many of us have fallen.

The reasons for it are many. First of all, we are living in stressful times. Secondly, the details and difficulties of post-war life take a heavy toll of nervous energy. Small tasks, so it seems are just another deadweight on our over-taxed resources of energy, not to speak of patience. No wonder we feel "on edge," never really ill and never really well.

Can anything be done? Is there an answer for those who find a minor worry a major difficulty, or for those of us who get irritated and bad-tempered at the slightest provocation? Yes, there is. The answer is Just Relax.

That sounds simple, too simple. Nevertheless, the most effective answer to the tension which the present pace of life brings on is relaxation of the mind and body.

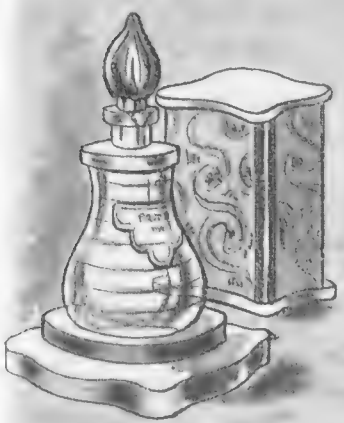
Relaxation is an art. Something to be learned and practised. You feel perhaps that you have no time to relax. You have. We all have. The important thing is to learn to relax in small doses. To relax for a few moments at a time—whenever you can and whatever you are doing. Five minutes of complete rest is of more value than an hour of just sitting, tense.

In these stolen minutes practise total relaxation. Let your limbs, your muscles and your mind become slack. When it is practicable relax lying flat on your back. Close your eyes, slacken every muscle beginning at your toes, letting your legs, trunk, arms, neck and head go limp. Dismiss thought and think blank. If this is impossible relax in a chair. Let everything go limp. Practise relaxing when you first get into bed. It is a wonderful preparation for sound and peaceful sleep.

Even in the busiest life there are odd moments when one can sit for a few moments in peaceful relaxation. It sounds improbable that a few moments of rest can make a difference, but if you make a habit of complete relaxation, however brief, you will be astonished at the result.

There is a still wider interpretation of the term. Use your leisure wisely to counteract the tension which your daily occupation imposes. If you have a sedentary job which taxes you mentally, occupy yourself in your leisure hours with something which makes demands upon your physical energy. A brilliant writer of my acquaintance finds wood-carving a most peaceful recreation. Another woman executive in a big store finds peace in *petit point*.

It sounds a little trite to say that laughter is the answer to nervous tension. Nevertheless there is truth in it. Seek the lighter side of life. Push out the gloomy thoughts. Only you can do it. When Abraham Lincoln was criticized for halting work to read a few pages from the work of a famous humourist, he replied, "Without a few minutes of laughter each day I should go mad." He was a wise man. Remember that you "laugh and the world laughs with you. Cry and you cry alone."



Scent On Approval

GOOD perfumes, so long denied us, are back again now at a price that is not beyond the average woman's means.

The devaluation of the franc has gratifyingly reduced the cost of French perfumes. Lanvin's famous Artege can be bought in London for 55s., and a small bottle of My Sin or Scandal as haunting as only French perfumes can be, is down to 42s. 6d. Moment Supreme and Amour Amour, by Jean Patou whose perfumes are so well loved, cost little more.

Some of the best English perfumes are back again for the first time. Coty, for instance, have restored their full range, including the well-loved L'Aimant from 19s. 3d. A tiny bottle of Helena Rubinstein's Green Velvet is yours for 20s. 10d., and Elizabeth Arden's famous Blue Grass in a light toilet perfume form called Flower Mist, for 10s. 6d. Cyclax returns with Whispering and Sombre Music in a charming Christmas rose pack, 42s. 6d., and the most popular of Goya's five fragrances, Heather, Studio and Great Expectations in travel sizes together cost 7s. 6d.

A heart-shaped cake is first spread with white icing. One half is decorated with a trellis of pink icing, using a thread tube; the other is treated with white icing through a star tube and finished with a marzipan flower

(*On right*) Cottage made of biscuits with doors and windows of chocolate icing. Spread biscuits for the roof with melted chocolate and press on to the walls with icing. Fir twigs make trees

By
Harriet Muir

Decorating

WHEN decorating the Christmas cake be generous with the icing, both almond and white to make up for any lack of richness underneath. Royal icing is the most satisfactory for large decorated cakes because it is hard, keeps well, and can be put through a forcing tube for fancy decoration and lettering. This cannot be done with glacé and water icing. If the two egg whites needed to ice a large cake are not available, substitute gelatine. Dissolve about ½ oz. of gelatine in ½ pint of hot water. When cold use mixture as though it was white of egg, reckoning 1 tablespoonful as 1 egg white. Another handicap may be the lack of a good icing machine. This can be remedied by making your own forcing bag. Take a piece of strong material such as twill or unbleached linen. Fold into shape of a cone, stitch the side and tie the required nozzle firmly into the hole at the pointed end. Put the icing in the bag, and twist the upper part of bag round and round till it forces icing through. Another useful aid to icing is a sterilized hair grip—put a blob of icing on the end and you can trail it along into fine lines for lettering, or twirl it round into rosettes.

Here are a few useful hints to remember when decorating a cake :

(*a*) Keep a pan of hot water simmering on the stove ready for dipping in a knife for smoothing the surface or repairing any damage.

(*b*) *A stiffer icing will be needed for decoration than for coating the cake.* But the remainder—after the cake has been coated and allowed to dry will probably be stiff enough.

(*c*) For lettering, lines, or borders do not hold nozzle too close to the cake and make a clean finish by cutting the icing with a knife.

Whirls of chocolate icing spouted from a forcing bag with the star tube are surmounted with almonds and candied flowers

(*On right*) Royal icing dripped unevenly over the edges of the cake give the effect of snow on a tree stump. Lumps of marzipan stuck on the sides and coated with icing make a gnarled effect

No Waste No Want

IF you have invited your Christmas guests before knowing what food you can muster, the hour comes when the bird or meat has to be stretched to its uttermost. There are a number of delicious additions which can be served with either that almost make a meal in themselves. The careful choice of these embellishments will often make it possible to afford a luxury bird such as guinea fowl or pheasant which few of us could consider if it meant buying two instead of one. The same with meat, we might allow ourselves the unusual treat of choosing one of the more expensive portions if we can make up the quantity in other ways. First a few suggestions to make poultry go far.

CHICKEN (WITH SWEDISH GARNISH)

Prepare chicken and stuff with herb forcemeat. Roast in the usual way and serve with any or all of the following.

CORN FRITTERS

One tin sweet corn or fresh cobs well boiled and grains removed from cob. Drain corn well, make some stiff frying batter (about ½ pint), add corn. Drop tablespoonfuls into steaming hot fat and fry till golden brown on both sides.

GRILLED SAUSAGES ON TOMATOES

Split sausages in half lengthwise and grill in oven. Cut some large tomatoes in half and grill on lower shelf. Bake some fingers of bread. Lay half a sausage and half a tomato on each sprinkled with chopped parsley.

STUFFED PANCAKES

Make a number of very small thin pancakes about 3 in. across from ½ pint of pancake batter. Fill with fried mushrooms, diced very small, and chopped parsley scattered over, minced bacon or any other savoury fillings. Roll up.

STUFFED CELERY

Cut sticks of celery into 3-in. lengths. Cook till tender. Fill with chicken liver creamed with a spoonful of tomato ketchup.

FRENCH GAME PIE

Ingredients: ¾ lb. sausage meat, 1 pheasant or other bird; ¼ lb. pork; 2 or 3 rashers of bacon; seasoning and spice; ½ lb. rough puff or short pastry.

Prepare a forcemeat by mincing sausage meat and pork finely, season with salt, pepper and a little spice to taste. Line bottom of pie dish with the forcemeat. Cut bird into joints and bacon in small pieces. Lay several joints and half the bacon on forcemeat, then rest of forcemeat, and finally remaining pheasant and bacon. Add about ¼ pint of stock or water. Cover with a good crust prettily decorated. Brush over with milk and bake in moderate oven, Regulo 5, or 350° F. for a good hour.

Now for two ways with meat.

STUFFED LOIN OF MUTTON

Ingredients: Loin of mutton.
Stuffing: ½ lb. sausage meat; 4 oz. white breadcrumbs; 2 oz. suet or melted cooking fat; 1 egg and milk, or just milk to bind; seasoning; chestnut purée.

Trim meat, removing superfluous fat. Prepare stuffing with ingredients as above. Fill inside of loin. Fold in ends and tie up. Roast in hot oven about 2 hours, Regulo 7, or 450° F. to begin with. Reduce heat after first 15 minutes, Regulo 5, or 400° F. (*Continued on page* 68)

The Cake

(*d*) Always prepare icing sugar well before using. Roll or sift until it becomes a fine powder.

ROYAL ICING

Ingredients: 1¼ lb. icing sugar; 2 eggs (whites or substitute as described); 2 teaspoonfuls lemon juice or a few drops of lemon substitute (a few drops from blue bag improves whiteness).

Put egg whites in bowl and beat well; add lemon and beat gradually into sugar. The mixture should be thick and creamy so that it keeps its shape when dropped from a spoon.

Set aside rather more than a quarter for decoration. Cover bowl with a damp cloth to keep moist. Pile icing on top of cake and spread all over, boldly and evenly with a palette knife. Make a smooth surface with a knife dipped in very hot water. Leave to dry—decorate. (*Continued on page* 68)

Plum Pudding To Keep

THERE are certain points to note in the preparation of your plum pudding if you wish to keep it, as it is often convenient to do. Quite a plain pudding can be made to keep for some weeks. Although stale bread is required for the crumbs, be particularly careful to see that there isn't the faintest sign of mildew. This often appears on fairly fresh bread at the present time. The same applies to suet, as you may have stored this for some weeks ahead, it should be safe if it has been kept in a cool, dry place.

Clean fruit with flour, not water, as damp fruit tends to make the pudding heavy and it sinks to the bottom.

When you have finished boiling your puddings for the first time remove cloth and let out the steam. When cold, cover again with a dry cloth, tie up and store in a cool, dry place.

A Christmas pudding made with the following proportion of ingredients will keep for some time.

6 oz. each of flour, breadcrumbs, and suet.
½ teaspoonful salt.
8 oz. fruit.
2 oz. candied peel.
Tablespoonful marmalade.
Beer to mix into a very stiff batter.
2 oz. cherries.
Teaspoonful mixed spice.
3 oz. sugar.
1 oz. syrup.
Teaspoonful baking powder.
Tablespoonful milk.
2 eggs.

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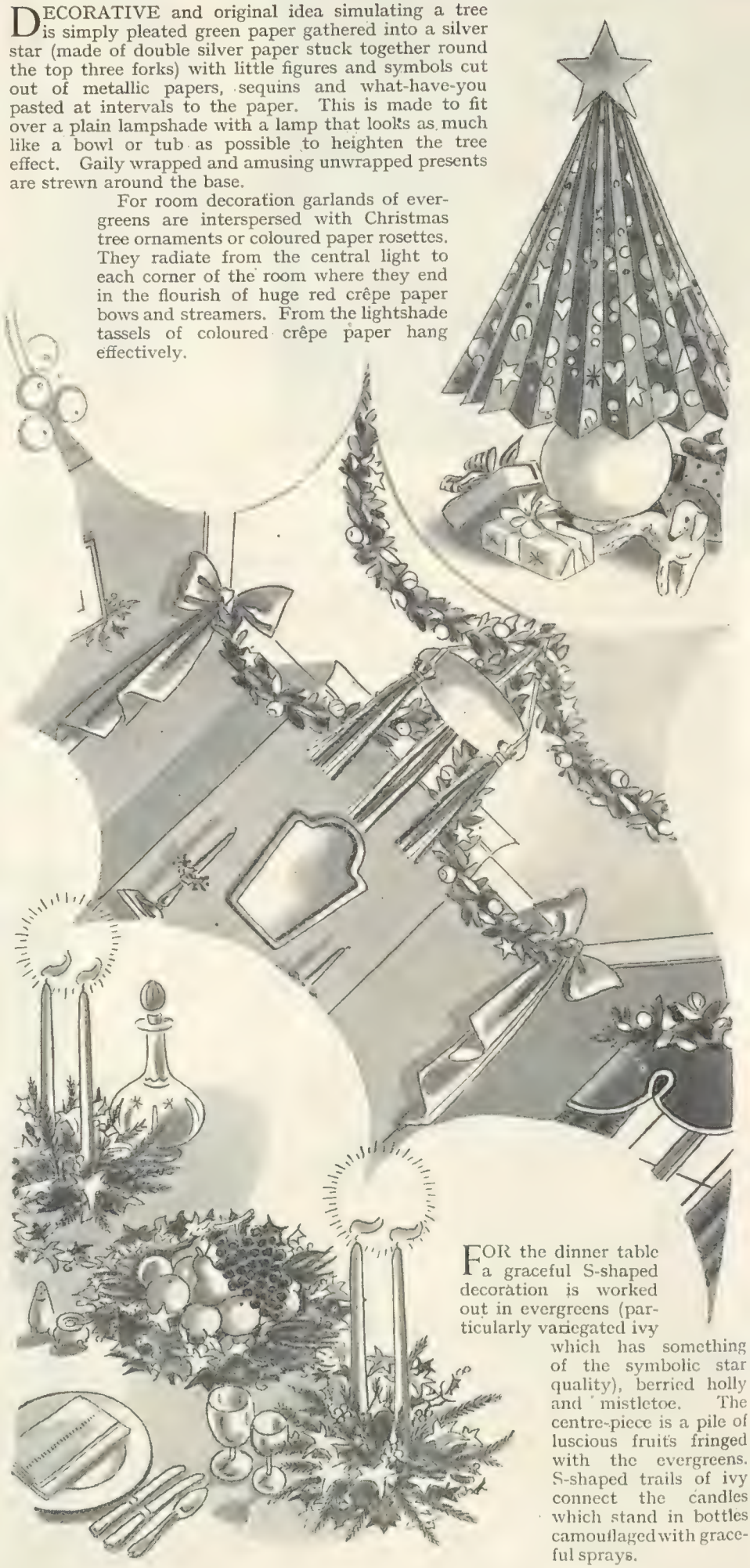
WON'T SHRINK

Novel Festive Decorations

DECORATIVE and original idea simulating a tree is simply pleated green paper gathered into a silver star (made of double silver paper stuck together round the top three forks) with little figures and symbols cut out of metallic papers, sequins and what-have-you pasted at intervals to the paper. This is made to fit over a plain lampshade with a lamp that looks as much like a bowl or tub as possible to heighten the tree effect. Gaily wrapped and amusing unwrapped presents are strewn around the base.

For room decoration garlands of evergreens are interspersed with Christmas tree ornaments or coloured paper rosettes. They radiate from the central light to each corner of the room where they end in the flourish of huge red crêpe paper bows and streamers. From the lightshade tassels of coloured crêpe paper hang effectively.



FOR the dinner table a graceful S-shaped decoration is worked out in evergreens (particularly variegated ivy which has something of the symbolic star quality), berried holly and mistletoe. The centre-piece is a pile of luscious fruits fringed with the evergreens. S-shaped trails of ivy connect the candles which stand in bottles camouflaged with graceful sprays.

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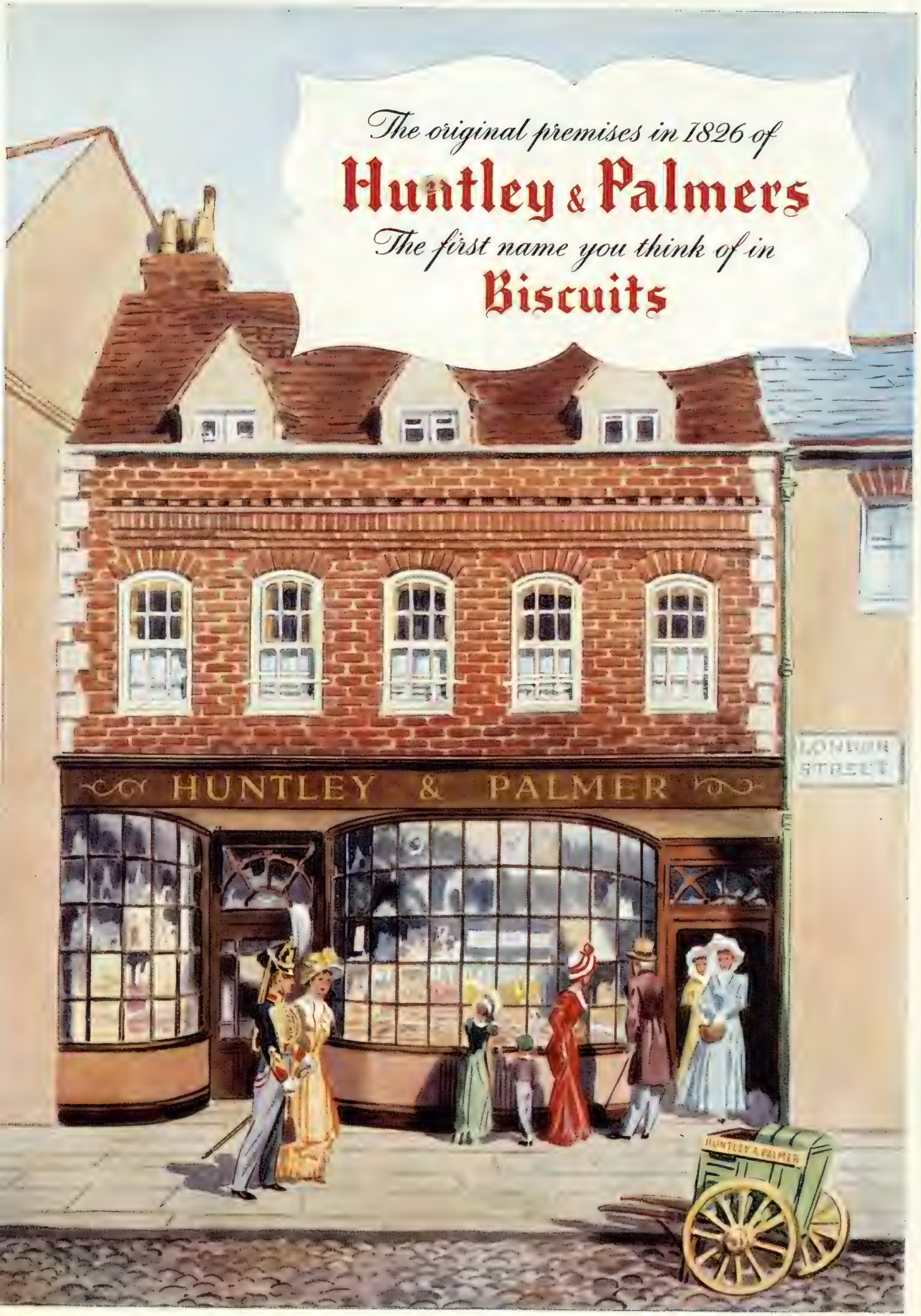
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Aids To Entertaining

ENTERTAINING is part of the Christmas festivity which throws a heavy burden upon the housewife. Any appliance that facilitates the serving of meals, therefore, will be particularly welcome at this time of year.

A tea wagon is useful for serving casual drinks and light refreshment during the evening, as well as for the traditional tea round the fire, especially if the wagon is fitted with light detachable trays which can be lifted out easily.

An Electric Hostess is an invaluable aid to entertaining in a maidless household. The "Hostess" is an electrically heated unit containing four two-point Pyrex containers and a plate warming compartment to hold up to twelve plates. Food, prepared in the kitchen in the normal way, and placed in the containers will keep hot and unspoilt for several hours and there are extra points to plug in the coffee percolator or kettle. Any hostess will appreciate the advantage of preparing a three-course dinner in the late afternoon and then forgetting all about it for an hour or so while she dresses at leisure and prepares an unflurried welcome for her arriving guests.

The "Hostess" is made in two models. The sideboard model price 15 guineas, is designed as a semi-permanent fixture for a sideboard or serving-table. The trolley model, however, on strong, rubber-tyred wheels is fitted with an adjustable top which can be used as a dining-table for two people. The trolley is finished in an attractive bronze tone to harmonize with dining-room furniture, and is priced at £25.

Cream tubular wagon with removable walnut-veneered trays and rubber-tyred wheels from Heals

The Electric Hostess, sideboard model, showing covered food containers and plate-warming compartment, from Selfridges

This delightful frilled bed jacket is perfect for winter days. Munrospun pattern number 5722 costs 5d. at your wool shop, or 6d. (post paid) from Munro & Co. Ltd., Dept. DBE, Restalrig, Edinburgh.

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All who suffer from colds are invited to send to Harwoods Laboratories Ltd., Watford, for descriptive booklet "Immunity from Colds."

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Why Not Wine?

The shortage and the cost of the more familiar drinks with which to support the Christmas spirit throws a new light on wine as an alternative at the right price

ONE of the misfortunes of war is that so many, more especially of the younger generation, have lost, or never found, a taste for good wine.

The impression persists that wine is beyond the means of average pockets, whereas in fact good French wines are available to-day at prices which compare very favourably with those of the drinks which in the lean years for wine we have come to take for granted.

The virtues of wine, taken as an aperitif or at other times, in place of spirits, are not widely appreciated. In France, one is offered a light white wine before dinner and excellent it is. Why not at home?

IF you are planning a Christmas party, give some thought to wine as a substitute for the spirits which are so hard to come by and so heavy on the pocket. Most people will respond to the novelty of it.

The wines of Bordeaux which are coming into the country now in increasing quantities and of a quality comparably with the pre-war best offer an infinite variety of choice.

Instead of cocktails give your guests on arrival a good medium dry Graves. This excellent wine will cost you about ten shillings a bottle, or alternatively a good dry white Burgundy at 12s. 6d. a bottle makes a delicious aperitif.

A good claret cup is an acceptable change from spirits. To serve six people you will need two bottles of claret (claret for a cup will cost about ten shillings a bottle), one bottle of Graves at the same price, a half gill of brandy, a few slices of cucumber, the rind of a lemon rubbed off on sugar loaf to taste, and a sprig of verbena. Mix the ingredients and stand for two hours. Strain and add two bottles of lemonade and one of soda water. Add a little ice.

Compare the price of this delicious and surprisingly potent drink with that of spirits to serve the same number of people.

Another good claret cup recipe: Grate the peel of two lemons finely, cover with fine sugar and over this pour a glass of sherry. Add two bottles of claret, a sprig of verbena and two bottles of soda water

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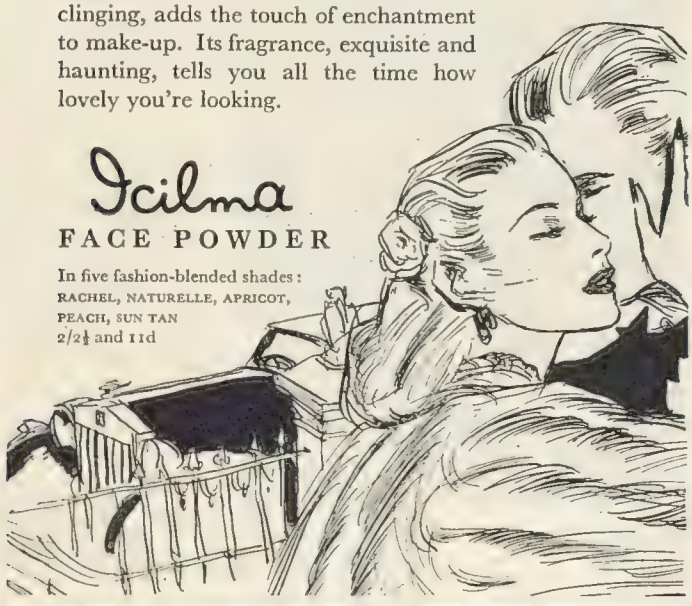

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Three Gifts For Father Christmas

(*Continued from page 12*)

"You're right in a way," said Reeves, "all the same, it's the second-rate man who over simplifies. He doesn't see all the issues involved."

"Christ had the supreme method," said Griffin, "He told stories nobody could ever forget, but they were packed with ideas, inexhaustible treasures. If only I could be like that!"

"Yes, fancy telling the Prodigal Son or the Good Samaritan for the first time!"

So they talked, and warmed to each other. Griffin found a bottle of beer and some glasses.

"You must come over to supper soon and meet my wife," said Reeves.

"And you'd better run home to her now," said Griffin, looking at his watch, "or you'll get into trouble."

Reeves, smiling, stood up to go.

"My goodness," he said suddenly, "I should be in trouble if I went without what I came for."

"What was that?"

"I hate to bother you, but I heard you had a Father Christmas outfit, and I wondered if I might borrow it for our children's party?"

"Of course. Take it along. We had our party this afternoon. But the clothes are in an awful state."

"I expect my wife can do repairs," said Reeves. And Griffin felt no anger.

"Try the things on here," he said, "In case they are hopeless. They are just in the cupboard."

In a few minutes Reeves stood there in the red robe and the white beard.

Behind the mask he felt a strange illumination, and all nervousness vanished. He no longer saw Griffin as a distinguished scholar, old enough to be his father. He saw clearly a tired, lonely man, who had spent his whole life giving, and hardly ever receiving.

When he spoke, his voice, distorted by the mask, took on a quality of authority and dignity.

"I think," he said, "that for many years you have been a Father Christmas to people all the year round. Do they ever make you a present?"

Griffin made no reply. He, too, seemed to feel a change of relationship.

"You don't answer," continued Reeves, "Because you know that what I say is true. I've a pretty shrewd idea what goes on. Every month, almost every week, they come to you asking for things. A prize for a whist drive, a subscription to the cricket club, help in time of sickness——"

"They are my people," broke in Griffin, defending them, "Their troubles are my own, and their joys, so far as I can enter into them——"

"Yes, but do they ever think of you? Do they ever say to themselves: 'He is not a rich man. He lives in a great house on a labourer's wage. Let us give him something for a change?'"

"You and I are both labourers," rebuked Griffin, "Labourers in the vineyard."

But Reeves would not be checked. He still wore the garments of St. Nicholas. He spoke with authority.

"It is your turn now to receive," he said, "If I were to offer you three gifts, three wishes, what would you choose?"

"Three wishes!" repeated Griffin, "Yes, I'll tell you something I would like. There's a boy from the parish, Tom Carver, the only son of his mother, and she is a widow. For him I would like to work the miracle of Nain. He is on the edge of death, at twenty-one."

"That is a good wish, but not for yourself," said Reeves, "What next?"

"I would like just once to preach a sermon that the people could hear gladly, the common people, as when Christ spoke to them."

"It is hard to give you gifts," said Reeves, "You ask nothing personal. Let this last wish be for yourself alone."

Griffin sat silent in his chair, looking up at Reeves.

"I have one wish," he said at length, "but I keep it to myself, for it is beyond the power of men, and it lies within the providence of God."

"May God grant you these three gifts, then, and more," said Reeves.

After a silence he pulled off the mask, and felt a sudden rush of embarrassment.

"I'm sorry, sir," he said, "I've presumed. I must go."

"Yes, go home to your wife and be happy, but there was no presumption. Don't forget the robes. Make good use of them again."

ON Christmas morning the church was well filled, for many came on that day who did not often put in an appearance. When the time came to preach Griffin, acting upon an uncontrollable impulse, set aside his carefully prepared address on The Social Implication of the Incarnation.

He just talked to the people very simply, from the heart as well as from the head, and, almost for the first time in his life, he bridged the gulf. There was nothing cheap about the way he spoke, for stunts were alien to his nature and he would water down the faith for no man, but he made the youngest child and the dullest yokel feel and see the Manger at Bethlehem, with its amazing mingling of the miraculous and the ordinary. Here majesty and humility joined hands, and the love of God shamed the selfishness and the pretensions of men.

"Look first at the Child in the manger," he said, "Then see your own soul in a mirror. Learn how God set aside His glory, emptied Himself, and became our servant, humble and suffering, turned from the Inn. Once we have realized that how can we dare to exalt ourselves, with our petty achievements and attainments?"

He paused, and went on:

"The Star of Bethlehem is an everlasting light, pendant in the darkness of human folly and sin, drawing us all, if we have the eyes to see, to bring our worship and our gifts to the source of all love, whether we be working men or scholars, Shepherds or Kings. At the Manger we are one, all children, all crying out for forgiveness and for the assurance that God Himself was made man. . . ."

GRIFFIN was hardly conscious of what he had done, until after the service, when men and women waited outside to see him and to speak to him.

"You've made me think before, sir. This time you made me feel as well."

Miss Beale spoke, without affectation for once, quite naturally: "I feel ashamed of myself, but full of hope."

Griffin's distaste for her melted.

"God's love shamed us all," he said, "But it is a clean shame and purifying. I need it more than you."

"No, no," she said, looking straight at him, "I've been a fool and a snob. That's finished."

She turned and walked away. Griffin was touched with the pitiful honesty.

"What lonely pilgrims we all are, acting parts. . . ."

AND so, after Christmas, Griffin grew closer to the understanding of his parishioners. Always he had loved them and served them, but now they felt that love, and there was a response, a greater warmth of greeting.

But one terrible grief hung heavy over the whole village. Tom Carver, in the local hospital, was worse, and suffering much pain.

At twenty-one it was rare to develop an inoperable cancer, but that appeared to be the case, after an exploratory operation.

"I'm sorry. There is nothing to be done."

"That's what the doctor told me, sir," said Mrs. Carver to Griffin, "And it's hard. I suppose it's the will of God, but I don't see no reason to it."

There was no use falling back on pious platitudes. Griffin pressed the woman's hand and said nothing. He had that appalling sense of being useless and helpless.

"Mary had to see (*Continued on page 56*)

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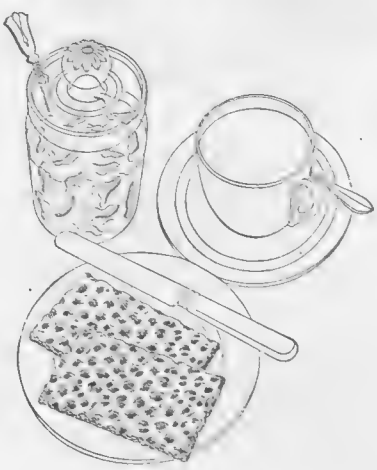
Ryvita and Marmalade



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OLD SCOTCH WHISKY
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Gossamer-fine Powder, Eye Cosmetique, Rouge, from 3/9 to 7/6.

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That pair of "MODERNA" Blankets you have waited for so long has gone overseas to buy you all these:

your **MEAT**—one Week's Ration for 2 years.

or **SHELL-EGGS**—6 Shell-Eggs per week for a year.

or **BUTTER**—¾ lb. per week for a year.

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Our "inside needs" are more urgent than our "outside comforts"! So, "MODERNA" Blankets, all pure lamb's wool in lovely pastel shades, are being sold abroad to pay for the food we need.

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MYTHOLMROYD, YORKS.

her son die by inches on the Cross," he said at last, "But he rose again."

SITTING in his study Griffin thought the whole matter over. One verse from the Bible haunted him.

"*And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. . . .*"

Over and over again he turned things over in his mind, arguing with himself: "But I have prayed and prayed again, here and at the hospital, and the boy is no better. He is going to die. Why? Why?"

He could not rest, so he walked the couple of miles over to Pemberton to see Reeves. The two men were fast friends by now, and young Mrs. Reeves renewed memories of his own happy marriage. Griffin found her in the garden, looking gay and serene.

"You're worried, Mr. Griffin," she said, "I wish I could help."

"I can't get young Tom Carver out of my head."

"The boy with cancer?"

"Yes. What am I to do? What can I do?"

"Talk it over with Jack," she said, "He's in."

"REEVES," burst out Griffin, when they were alone, "What's wrong with us? There's no power in our faith. All we do is to talk and argue and quarrel. Why can't I heal Tom Carver? Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

"My dear man, you're all on edge. You've been working too hard. Remember, even Christ couldn't always work miracles, when faith was lacking."

But Griffin would not be comforted. He was beside himself. "The boy has faith. So has his mother. It's my fault."

"Nonsense," said Reeves sharply, "We can't all live for ever. That would be chaos and stagnation. There can't be miracles for every case of sickness."

"I know, but this boy——"

"Yes, I agree," said Reeves, "On the surface it seems to deny the love of God. All the same Tom Carver is one solitary individual; but hundreds and thousands of lives are saved to-day by progress in medicine and surgery. Men and women who would have died a hundred years ago. God does work through men's intellects and skill, as well as through miracles. You ought to admit that, you a scholar!"

"You're right, I suppose," said Griffin, "Tom Carver is just one piece of dust on the wrong side of the scales. On the right side we have anaesthetics, penicillin and modern drainage. Hang it all, that's common sense, but it's cold blooded. I *know* that Christ would have cured this boy. What next?"

"Christian resignation?"

"For myself, yes. For a man of twenty-one, never! He is born to do something better than rot to death in a hospital ward. Wait, I have an idea, small as a man's hand."

"What is it?"

"Have you got an old *Times* with the New Year's Honours?" The paper was unearthed, after a search. Mrs. Reeves was about to lay the fire with it.

"There!" said Griffin, pointing to a name, "That's the man. Charles Hodge. He was at school with me, and then at Cambridge. He was up at Caius, a brilliant medical student. Now he's knighted. And I am, what I am."

Reeves looked at the notice. "For outstanding services in cancer research."

"I should have thought of him before," said Griffin, "I saw his name, and I did nothing. It did not register, for I was too engrossed. We've drifted apart, and I am diffident of asking a favour, but it's not for myself. He might come. The local men may be wrong."

"Strike at once," advised Reeves, with enthusiasm, "I've got a telephone. We'll get his number from inquiries."

THE next day Sir Charles Dodge came down from London and heard the whole story of Tom Carver. Then he went to see the boy in the hospital, where he was received with awe.

"I think I can do something," he said, at last. And to Griffin he said: "Walter, you old ass, it's good to see you. I've never seen a saint before." After which there were reminiscences and pipes in the study, and the great man stayed for a week at the Rectory, proving himself a remarkable cook. So Father Christmas got his second wish, for Tom Carver, pale but convalescent, came home to his mother's cottage just before Easter.

"Tom's a walking miracle," they said in the village.

ON Easter Monday, rummaging about in odd corners, Mrs. Reeves called to her husband: "Jack, come here. You're a disgrace."

"What have I done now?"

"Look, you've never taken back Mr. Griffin's Father Christmas clothes. They've been here over three months. It's too bad."

Reeves was suitably penitent.

"I'll drive over with the things now and bring old Griffin back to lunch. How's that?"

"A very good idea. I'm sure he never eats a proper meal."

"No," said Reeves, "But he's been better lately. He's getting more help from the people, and he's as pleased as Punch about Tom Carver. Well, I'll be off. Back soon."

He drove up to the Rectory, hooting cheerfully. Then he ran up the steps and knocked. He rang the bell. No answer.

"He may be out. I'll go in and wait."

The front door, country fashion, was not locked, so Reeves went into the hall, calling.

"Griffin, I say, Griffin, I'm being henpecked over Father Christmas!"

There was no response.

"Must be out. I'll wait in the study and look at his books." But when Reeves went into the study, Griffin was sitting quietly in his favourite shabby chair, with the Holy Sonnets resting on his lap.

"Fast asleep. Poor old man. Worn out by Sunday."

Then, with clearer illumination, Reeve fell on his knees, for Griffin's third, unspoken, wish had been fulfilled, and he had gone to join his wife again, where Easter is eternal.

END

Three Gifts For Father Christmas

When Was Jesus Born?

(*Continued from page 13*)

namely, in the years 28 B.C., 8 B.C., and A.D. 14. It was obvious that Christ was not born during the first or third of these censuses, but it was some time before scholars could accept with certainty that the second census was the year of Christ's birth. Until quite recently they were not sure that Cyrenius was in Syria in 8 B.C. Then historical records were found and deciphered and these proved Cyrenius was governor of Syria at that time, and also confirmed that Herod was in Jerusalem.

So 8 B.C. is now the accepted year of the Saviour's birth. He was born 1956 years ago, not 1948. To-day this surmise is generally undisputed mainly because of the efforts of the archaeologists in Ankara. This is ancient Angora, one of the oldest sites in the world, having been occupied long before the Hittites. There are extensive Roman, Greek, Persian and other remains in the form of ruins of colossal buildings, temples and monuments.

The Turkish Government wisely decided that these monuments should be preserved, and archaeologists have been busy restoring them and translating the inscriptions found on them. Perhaps the most famous of these monuments is the mammoth marble temple dedicated to Augustus Caesar. It has now been cleared of the debris which partially hid it, with the result that one can now read the inscription on the wall of the porch.

It makes more than interesting reading, for it is an official autobiography of Augustus which he compiled himself only a few months before his death. (*Continued on page 58*)

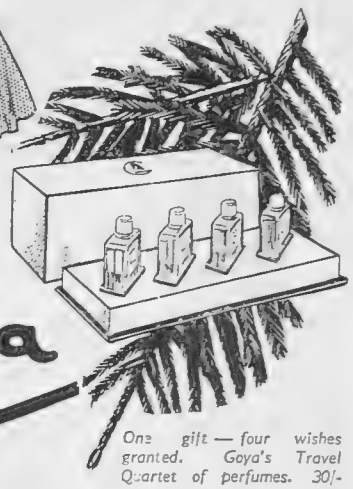
WILL THEY?

If the lady were packing woollens you would say they are good travellers—don't crease easily and recover from light creases of their own accord. If it's rayons—well, we hope they are branded TEBILIZED. For rayons branded TEBILIZED are treated for crease-resistance. They are not uncrushable. But they do have a power to resist and recover from creasing much as wool does.

FABRICS BRANDED TEBILIZED FOR TESTED CREASE-RESISTANCE

LOVELIEST GIFTS

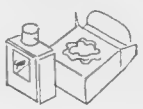
Enchantingly fragrant, exciting as Christmas morning itself . . . and of all things, those that she loves best . . . creations by Goya



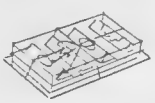
BY Goya

One gift — four wishes granted. Goya's Travel Quartet of perfumes. 30/-

Small but luxurious gift—a Travel Size bottle of one of Goya's superb perfumes. 7/6d



Four-in-a-row — the 'Goya Collection' of four fragrances in Handbag Phials. 10/-



Extra large Grandee lipstick with two Handbag Phials of Goya perfume. 12/9

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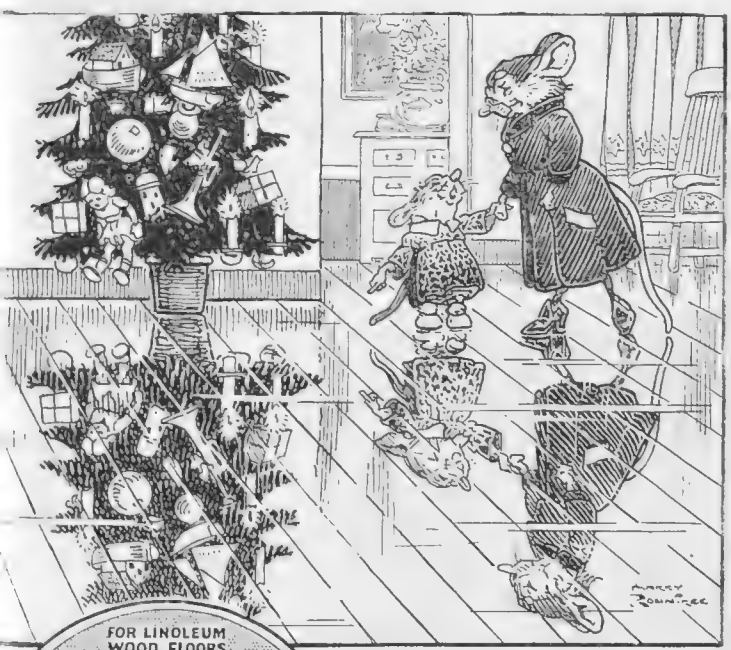

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MANSION HYGIENIC POLISH

FOR BRIGHT AND HEALTHY HOMES

"Ooh look, Mother!—what a lovely Christmas tree. And with all the toys and decorations reflected in the polished floor, it looks twice as nice."

FOR FLOORS, FURNITURE & LINO

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the trifles of to-day or the abundance of tomorrow, you will need a cooker with no restrictions on performance — you will need a MAIN.

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YOU CAN AFFORD

"More than a soap, a beauty treatment" . . . Personality has many exclusive virtues. One is its long-lasting quality, which makes it a really economical luxury.

AT SELECTED SHOPS EVERYWHERE

personality
TURTLE OIL SOAP

Made in historic Ashby-de-la-Zouch Leicestershire

I KNOW WHAT I LIKE FOR COLDS!

It smells nice, and feels grand and my! how fast it brings relief!

Your little one feels better right away when you rub Vick on chest, throat and back at bedtime!

Works Outside! Vick warms the skin like a poultice, relieving achy tightness. **Works Inside!** At the same time, its medicinal vapours are breathed in, and clear stuffy nose, soothe sore throat, ease coughing.

This "inside-outside" action works for hours while your little one sleeps. By morning, usually, the worst of the cold is over.

VICK VAPOUR-RUB

He certainly was not a humble individual and did not intend anything he was or did to be overlooked. The inscription records his public offices — and these were considerable — his benefactions, his military and administrative achievements, and, not least, the historic census mentioned in Luke's Gospel. It is written in both Latin and Greek. It reveals that the number of Roman citizens on the roll was 4,233,000.

Nowhere in the New Testament are we told the month or the date of Christ's birth. But it does, however, indicate the time of the year by reference to shepherds being in the fields keeping watch over their flocks by night. Unfortunately for English sentiment it could not have been in December, when flocks are kept in the folds. It is only in summer that sheep graze freely in the cool of the evening and during the night. Then the Romans were practical people and, taking the period into consideration, were wise and tactful rulers. They certainly would not have ordered a census in the depth of winter when travelling would have been difficult, nor at the time of harvest, or during Jewish feasts. Consequently the enrolment must have taken place at the end of September or the beginning of October. Most scholars now place the birth of Christ on September 30.

Many believe Jesus was born in a manger surrounded by cattle. But this is not a true picture of the probable scene. In laying new flagstones in front of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem the remains of a former building were discovered. The Antiquities Department of the Palestine Government sank shafts into the ground to see what they could find. The evidence shows that the grotto beneath the church, which is accepted as the manger, was the stable portion of a house.

Now the interior of a peasant's house in

When Was Jesus Born?

Palestine is divided into two sections, the upper storey, known as the *mustabeh*, where the family live, and lower portion, the *rowyeh*, where cattle are accommodated. When visitors come and there is no room for them on the mustabeh, they sleep and live in the rowyeh. But the cattle are always turned out, and mats and rugs are laid on the floor. From an eastern point of view this accommodation can be made both attractive and convenient.

It must be remembered that no mention is made of a stable in the New Testament. Matthew, speaking of the Wise Men, says: "And when they were come into the *house* they saw the young Child and Mary His Mother." True, Luke refers to a manger. He tells us that the shepherds "found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger."

Luke's short and vivid words have lingered longer in the memory of most owing to the more romantic scene a manger conjures up in the average imagination. But it can be safely assumed that what Luke meant is the manger found in a peasant's home and not a cattle manger found in a stable standing by itself. Should a baby be born in a *rowyeh* of a house its manger would naturally be a safe place in which to lay it and would be the obvious place to look for it.

Having failed to obtain accommodation in the inn, the only hope of Joseph and Mary finding shelter for the night was in the stable portion of an ordinary Bethlehem home. In this they succeeded, though they may have had difficulty in finding one which was not already crowded out with census visitors to the little town. It is very strange that this matter of "accommodation"—one of the world's greatest needs to-day—should figure so strongly in the birth of Jesus.

END

Christmas Unlimited (*Continued from page 16*)

their bellies, and conquered the night-stiffened invaders. Now there's a brisk Christmas trade in bundles of faggots tied with green ash twigs. It's more than merely ceremonial. As each green band bursts on the fire, you drink a toast.

Catherine Howard flits down the painted passages of Hampton Court at Christmas. Any number of other famous ghosts are awakened by the click-clack of Santa Klaus's reindeer galloping down the sky and over the chimney-pots. But you don't really need to cast too many scared glances backward as you walk to your room at the end of the long dark corridor in the old country house where you're a Christmas guest. The creak behind you is no phantom footstep, nor need you fear that once you're tucked into the big four-poster some horrific spook will materialize, moaning as it points a skeleton finger at the rusty dagger stuck in its breastbone. For the notion that ghosts walk at Christmas-time is simply an illusion created by book publishers and stores putting out volumes of ghost stories to catch the Christmas trade.

CHRISTMAS is the publishers' Big Time. A book brought out then is sure of a twenty-five per cent larger sale. That's a seasonal phenomenon. It depends on the book, of course. People don't buy *Forever Amber* or *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* as Christmas gifts. But they do buy books like Churchill's war "Memoirs," or Eisenhower's *Crusade in Europe*, an omnibus Shakespeare, or an anthology. Kipling in *de luxe* editions, Dickens, Keats, Longfellow, and even the eroded Ruskin, all take a sharp sales uptilt this month. Eliminate Christmas, and book publishers and book-store *entrepreneurs* would be eating old boiled fowl instead of dining on caviare, turkey, Bollinger, and a sound old port at an uncontrolled price.

Last month I met in Paris a New York merchant who had paused there on his way to a place he called Beit Lahm. He had interests there, and was concerned about them as the British troops and police moved out. It turned out he was a Bethlehem-born Christian Arab whose father migrated to America and became an importer of Biblical tableaux and Red Sea mother-o'-pearl. Beit Lahm, he explained, is Arabic for Bethlehem. It means "Place of Food."

I told him I was through Bethlehem five years back and everything seemed flourishing then. Talking to him was like conversing with a Deauville hotelier. The Beit Lahm inns, however, are older at the business of catering for a short rush season. They started when satrap Pontius Pilate ordered a population census, and Mary and Joseph accordingly found themselves in the little town, and crowded out of the inn, so that they had to shelter in the stable, where Mary brought forth her first-born Son.

Now, nineteen and a half decades later, the 12,000 population of Bethlehem depend on Christmases (three: the Anglo-Saxon on December 25, Greek on January 6, and Armenian on January 12) instead of censuses for their busy season. The pilgrims run 10,000 in a bad year, 30,000 in a good year. They throng Manger Square, buy relics and rosaries, crosses and cribs, and join the long queue that moves slowly, endlessly, into the Church of the Nativity; down the steps into the Chapel of the Nativity and the Chapel of the Manger, with its big silver star and Latin inscription: "Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary," and so out again, and back to a seasonally high-priced lodging for the night.

The food business is lamentably not what it was. I was looking at a prewar Christmas dinner I well remember. Here it is:

Consomme au Tapioca
Croquettes de Langoustes
Truite a la Crillon
Filet de Boeuf a la Bec
Dinde truffee rotie
Salade du Celeri
Petits Pois au Sucre
Elan a Vanilla

I got through it with ease. With my present shrunken stomach I would be sunk before the *Dinde truffee rotie* appeared. In those days the food trade depended on quantity plus quality. A national Christmas dinner hinging on a single meat or poultry course would have (*Continued on page 61*)

BY APPOINTMENT
BISCUIT & VITA-WEAT
CRISPBREAD MANUFACTURERS

A merry Christmas

and your fair share of our biscuits

From MR.PEEK *and* MR.FREAN

PEEK FREAN & CO. LIMITED · KEETON'S ROAD · LONDON · S.E.16

RANGERS
by Lotus

hit provision merchants as a stock market slump hits the brokers.

IN Milan last spring I asked a stout publisher how he got along during the war. He said a pre-war investment in a *Po capitone* bed helped. Catholics, of course, bypass meat on Christmas Eve—the auction in the Rome fish market December 23 is something. Consequently in the country where undoubtedly Christmas was invented there has developed the fish equivalent of the Christmas turkey or goose, the rich, succulent and costly food that is seldom eaten at any other time. This is the big sea eel called *capitone*. Originally fishermen went out Christmas week and fished for *capitone*. But it was a hit-or-miss business. So the brains of the Rome market organized *capitone* breeding beds at the Po's mouth. It's as sure a source of income as a stake in an English turkey farm.

The music publishers do a brisk Christmas trade, and seldom pay any composer royalties on it. The music was composed so long ago. It ranges from archaic folk tunes to immense oratorios, in form and style over the whole music field. If the composer of "In Dulci Jubilo" could return and collect royalties on all Christmas performances of his melody, he would return to the shades with more than his original weight in gold. Bing Crosby's favourite "A White Christmas" is more popular, but is unlikely to be so enduring. "In Dulci Jubilo" was composed in the fourteenth century.

Bored one evening in a nobleman's house, Berlioz picked up a piece of paper. He began to trace an Andantino for organ; but his imagination began to work, the organ piece faded, he heard the shepherds at Bethlehem saying farewell to the Holy Family departing for Egypt; and he swiftly wrote the most popular chorus of his "Childhood of Christ" triology. On publication, the orchestra score sold for five francs. A franc was a franc then.

CHRISTMAS trees have no religious significance. The custom, only a century old, stems from the enterprise of businessmen who saw a profitable new market for ever-

Christmas Unlimited

green thinnings (Prince Albert was probably an ambassador for the German export trade in forestry saplings when he introduced the custom into England). The industry is a big one now, with an annual harvest in Anglo-Saxondom and Europe of 30,000,000 trees annually. All varieties contribute: pines, hemlocks, cedars, junipers and firs, with the spruce topping the list as favourite. Most are plantation thinnings, but a good quantity come from farmers utilizing land too poor to grow anything else.

Christmas's youngest tradition is promoting some more trade now. The first communal Christmas tree was set up by the Paris citizens soon after 1840. It was not a success because candles outdoors are not practical. It took the invention of the electric light to start the communal Christmas tree movement.

London had its first last Christmas. It brought enchantment to that drab stone yard under Nelson's column. The Norwegians sent it over. When I mentioned it to an editor friend in Oslo last summer he said they were spending a lot of money trying to make Britain "Norway-conscious" for trade purposes, and that Christmas tree was the best value for money they'd had so far. They're doing it again this year—a sixty-foot giant from the Nordmark, a forest on the hills behind Oslo.

A trifle, but it will mean a lot as the custom grows and overlaps to other towns. You should see how Park Avenue in New York is transformed by thirty gigantic Christmas trees planted on the traffic islands inside the rails from 46th to 96th Streets. I inquired the cost when I saw the dazzling spectacle. It was $400 (£100) a tree then, including cost of tree, labour, decorations, electricity, and 300 light bulbs per tree. Probably cost more now; but worth it.

Yes, Christmas costs money—and makes money. Even the Christmas kissing isn't free. Look what you have to pay for an imported spring of that parasitic weed, mistletoe!

END

Walk Of The Moon

(*Continued from page* 19)

worked white linen, part of her guarded dower. And in the gesture and the action, her husband saw nothing untoward.

THE trim ambulance came, soundlessly, down the moorland road. Nearing the farm, its lights were dimmed and Jukes got out. Still in his farm muck, he worked before it, quietly, opening gates. Outside the farmhouse, three heavy men in uniform and one in grey flannels looked at the door. They found it slightly open—whispered together—and marched straight in.

The stranger was just ending the supper he had chosen: honey, milk, cresses and bread and butter. He did not look up. One would have thought him at prayer. . . .

Benjamin Peters roared to his feet, demanding their business: a scraggy and terrible figure of wrath. The uniformed men closed in on the silent one. In practised concert, they gripped him and dragged him out of his chair.

Then, nonchalantly, the flannelled one proclaimed himself as a Doctor M'Govern, saying the others were County Asylum attendants. The man at supper was an escaped lunatic.

"Sorry and all that, Mr. Peters. But we try to nab 'em without undue fuss. Saves them and us and others from harm. In the circumstances, you'll have to excuse our unceremonious butting-in." He turned, then, and addressed the stranger. "Who'd have thought it of you, Manny? My best 'exemplary,' too!"

"Doctor, time is dying for all men. I had work to do in the world."

M'Govern sighed and grinned. "Ah, yes. The same old tale—you always have had. But the world'll just have to carry on without you, Manny. It's far too busy with its own affairs to bother with your tarradiddling, old man. 'Fraid you'd be lost in it, anyway. You just toddle back home with us."

"You—you dare to say," and Mary's voice was as a whorl of vipers, "this man is *mad?*"

Doctor M'Govern speculated on her. Damn beautiful kid, he thought. Golden eyes, b'god! Italianate Jewess, if Jukes is right about Peters being an American Jew.

"That's official opinion, Mrs. Peters. He's certified. For my part—well—I see naught much wrong in him." He snapped at the attendants. "No need to hold him like that. Manny never causes trouble—do you, Manny?"

"That is as you say, Doctor. I must be content."

"Walked out this morning, sweet as kiss your hand," M'Govern went on. "We've roped him in pretty quickly. And that's thanks to your man, Jukes."

"*Jukes?* Jukes told you——"

"That's right, Mr. Peters. Phoned us from the village. He'd heard the circulated description and immediately recognized your visitor. Smart work—eh? But the crabbed little beggar made us bring the thirty bob with us—trust these Yorkshire Tykes for making sure!"

"Bring thirty shillings with you? What for?"

"Oh—he's collected that—as reward."

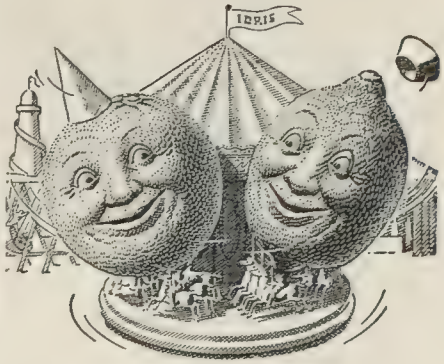
Peters' eyes flashed under suddenly great tears. He threw back his head, and M'Govern was made, instantly, to recollect the agony on the face of the central figure in the grouping of Laocoon. "Jukes!" Peters laughed despairingly, and shouted in a vast voice. "O! *Am Harretz!*"

"Which sounds," and the doctor nervously chuckled, "remarkably like a dirty crack to me! What's it all about—I'll buy it."

"Yes," Mary's talking was soft, yet terrible, "do buy it . . .

(*Continued on page* 62)

We are now ROUND-AND-ABOUT AGAIN



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TALCUM

—imparts the fragrance of a newly-opened flower—for cool, satin-like comfort, DUBARRY TALCUM is the dainty woman's necessity. Its caressing softness is a luxurious experience—an after bath delight. From Chemists and Stores 3/9 including tax.

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MANUFACTURERS OF HIGH GRADE WEATHERWEAR

It means 'thing-of-the-lowest-earth' — the dirtiest of cracks—*yes*." She stiffened. "The dirtiest a Jew can utter, in his scorn."

"*Aye*—a Jew—a Jew!" Peters beat his breast. "How proud am I of that—now!"

For the first time the stranger smiled, and it was as though a light within a lily lived. "Peace," he whispered. "Be still. Now let me depart——"

". . . The oddest, most pathetic of cases," the doctor murmured as his men ushered their captive into the long passage-way. "No one knows who he is—whence he came. Calls himself Emmanuel and fiddles about with bits of wood all day. He speaks an awesome number of languages, all perfectly, people tell us. And he has an intellect—for what it's worth—that can infuriate the best of 'em. We have him up against scientists and lawyers, medical men and mathematicians, and we know! A genius, gone adrift of course—all background and identity lost. Had to park him inside. Went about preaching: wanted to save the world or something. *Gee!* We do tumble across 'em!"

Neither Mary nor her husband replied. Hand in hand, they walked slowly, as with secrets greater than their strength.

Outside the house, Benjamin Peters saw Jukes.

He bellowed, picked up a heavy yard broom, and went for the fellow. Jukes gave a strangled yelp—and ran. Straight down the cobbled yard he fled. There was a clanking on the plough, a twanging of pig-wire and a crashing among the twisted boughs of elder.

"Fox-fox . . . for-ee-ee-ee-e!" The young doctor ullulated hunting-calls and choked with laughter. "Gone away-y-y! Oh, bad show! Dash it all, you've lost him, Mr. Peters!"

Panting, Peters stopped, and returned. "The swine," he spattered. "Abominable animal—earth-grub, scoundrel, traitor!"

Walk Of The Moon

The stranger turned as the back of the ambulance opened. Its dim interior light came bluely on his face.

"Farewell," he sighed to them. "For your little son I have left a gift. To you, Benjamin and Mary—be my love. Mary . . . thou art blessed . . . *thou knowest*."

Impatiently, above him, the attendants plucked. For one moment his arms were outstretched and his head was tiredly and agonizingly askew. Then the doors closed and they were gone.

Silently, Peters and his wife went back to their house.

A LITTLE figure met them—dancing and laughing and singing—purest linnet carollings of excitement and of joy. It was David. And he held in his arms a device of leather and iron and laces.

"Muvver—Dad-dad! *See!* That nice mans said, 'David, take off your cages and walk'."

Their son lived there before them, touched by miracle—made whole again. . . . And on the table where their guest had eaten, lay another gift. It was a tiny carven piece of wood: a crucifix.

Mary's hair had fallen into a Titian rain. She had rent her clothes at her throat, and she knelt at the feet of her son and sobbed. Stupidly, Peters looked at the little cross. Then, gently—majestically—he pressed it to his lips.

"God of my fathers; the One, the Indivisible—God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, see me . . . who has seen Thy Mystery within my house."

OUTSIDE in the night, heavy and awry, in the Judas tree, held by the neck to stare into the eternities he had entered, was a man with thirty shillings in his pockets.

END

The Black Market Of Days Gone By

(*Continued from page 20*)

informer, with the likelihood of being pushed "over cliff" some moonless night or tied down on the rocks for the tide to dispose of. In the village of Polperro, always notorious for its smugglers, "no one," so local history records, "would let a coastguardsman a house to live in at any price." Small wonder, then, that Preventive men sometimes elected to choose the safe and easy course of least resistance, or even, as sometimes happened, to turn smugglers themselves.

BUT there is another and a very different side to the picture.

By no means all Preventive men were venal, or timid, or inefficient. Take, for example, the work of the officers and crews of the Revenue cutters, those fast, skilfully handled little craft, of which the *Tartar* was one of the best-known examples, many of them captured smuggling vessels converted to Government service on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief. The cutters' business was to keep a constant watch on the coasts through the long, moonless nights which were best suited to the running of cargoes, and how ably they carried out their duties is shown by the records of the contraband they captured, sometimes not without a brisk struggle. Even more arduous than the work of the cutters themselves was that of the rowing-guard. At dusk each day the cutters' boats were dropped for the purpose of rowing along the coast during the night, to be picked up again at daylight at some appointed rendezvous. Should rough weather come on during their hours of duty, the rowers had either to find their way back to the parent ship, or run for shelter to the nearest haven, where, incidentally, a Preventive man was by no means sure of a friendly reception.

The work of the riding officer was little less exciting. In the winter months they had to be on their guards by dusk, and often did not reach home until nearly eight in the morning—sixteen hours on end in all weathers, with the chance of being shot, or kidnapped, or pushed over the cliff edge. As an old coastguardsman put it, "It was enough to kill a horse!"

A zealous Excise officer carried his life in his hands, and more than one instance is recorded of the price such men paid for their devotion, like the story of the gauger Parminter, sworn foe of the notorious Cornish smuggler, Cruel Coppinger. Parminter surprised his enemy one day in the act of running a cargo, and tried to take him into custody single-handed. But the smuggler and his crew were too many for him, and the fight ended with Coppinger forcing his opponent's head down on to the boat's thwart and cutting it off with his cutlass.

There may be, and probably is, a certain amount of fiction mingled with fact in the story of Parminter. But there is no doubt about the truth of the murder of Exciseman Galley and a shoemaker named Chater at the hands of some members of the notorious Hawkhurst gang. Even after the lapse of two centuries, the memory of the dreadful sufferings of the two men as they were flogged and beaten along the road from Rowlands Castle to Rake seems to haunt the narrow lanes along which the ghastly procession passed; and the precise spot near the latter village where Galley's body was buried, still breathing, is pointed out to this day as "Galley's grave."

So difficult was it to obtain evidence against smugglers that it was eighteen months before the murderers were at last brought to justice; and the tragedy of poor Galley's death served at least one useful purpose in bringing the Hawkhurst Gang's reign to an end, by the execution of the ring-leaders and the dispersal of their followers.

But it was the coming of the era of peace which was the last nail in the "fair trader's" coffin. He departed, to the great benefit of the community, in general leaving behind him only the tradition of his daring and skill. Even so the "spiv" of our own day may become—who knows?—the romantic adventurer of to-morrow.

END

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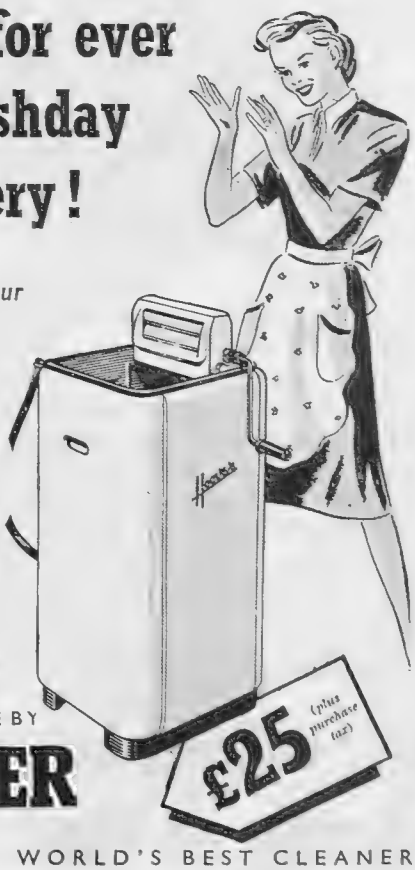

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It's only natural . .

. . . for her to enjoy the sunny hours by the pond watching the ducks dive for crumbs . . . she's seldom bored or fretful. But should some minor upset put her out of sorts, then Mother naturally turns to 'California Syrup of Figs' to restore regularity, bright eyes and sunny nature. This kindly, pleasant laxative contains the juice of ripe figs with an extract of senna. Purely vegetable and naturally nice.

'California Syrup of Figs'

Die With A Smile (*Continued from page 28*)

burn. Her happiness was going up in flames, but the fire, however brightly it burned, could not relieve the chill which she felt in her heart. She was not emotional now. Everything she did was carefully reasoned and thought out.

The flames of the burning paper gave a last flicker and went out. With the chased brass poker she crushed the ashes to powder, swept them up, and flushed them down the drain. This would be one piece of evidence the papers would not have.

They would have a holiday, the journalists, snooping around, leering, making dirty remarks, writing fictitious "exposés" of her "wild life" and the rest. Her death would make three-column headlines in all the papers, with pictures, sad comments of her friends, with all the trimmings that go with such events. She wondered if Press clippings can be read in Heaven. . . .

The antique clock on the mantelpiece read 11.55. In five minutes, the drum-roll from below would announce the beginning of the final scene. She could no longer draw back without making herself ridiculous. She opened the french windows and for a few seconds listened to the music whose noise covered the loud chattering of the assembled guests. They were still dancing, down there. And to-morrow the papers would scream of the spectacular suicide of lovely Georgette Georges, the poor little shooting star whose last moments had been marred by the noise of American jazz.

Closing the windows, she lighted every lamp in the outer chamber and opened the door of her boudoir. The coffin was there on its pedestal, waiting for her. Coolly she turned to the Louis XV dressing table and made up her lips afresh. Calmly she took from a small drawer a phial of a colourless, strong-smelling liquid. The contents she poured into a crystal goblet, which she would smash in the Russian fashion, after having drunk deep.

Downstairs the party was at its height. In two corners, new productions were being planned for the following season. At the bar, the supply of cognac was running low, but there was still plenty of champagne. The buffet looked as if it had survived a military campaign, but waiters kept it replenished. The music was bad, but rhythmical, and one could dance to it. When it stopped suddenly and a drum-roll was given, the noise was so great that none of the guests heard the short, sharp cry, the breaking of a glass, the thud of a body as it fell to the floor.

Midnight had struck.

As the drum-roll continued, the roar of conversation fell to a hum, then stopped altogether. The drummer ceased, and the band-leader spoke to the crowd. "Mesdames, Messieurs," he said, "Mademoiselle Georges has ordered me to offer you at midnight a new kind of music, prepared especially for to-night. What it is, I don't know, other than that on the phonograph there is a record to be played which will be, she tells me, of some interest to all of you."

The buzz of conversation rose about him as he stepped down from the bandstand, crossed to the record player, and switched it on. "Whatever can it be?" "She didn't tell *me* about it?" "Dear Georgette! Always something original!" And by the bar, the blond, long-haired prodigy of the moment hastily proved to the bystanders that this new kind of music, as yet unheard, could not possibly be as interesting or as important as his new concerto.

The drum rolled again. Quiet fell, and the leader placed the record on the turntable, set the needle on the rim of the disc, and turned the volume up full.

"My dear friends—all of you—I'm sorry if the only music on this record is that of my own voice. . . ."

The buzz of conversation rose again. "Why, it's Georgette!" "What on earth?" "I can't possibly imagine!" "Quiet, there, I can't hear a thing!" "Hush!"

The record continued: "—disappoint you, but it can't be helped. I have something to tell you all. This is the last you shall hear of my voice. I shall never speak again. As you listen Death has taken me by the hand, to lead me into the secret places which only he knows. You have danced to welcome him, now dance again to wish us both *bon voyage*. It's a trip without regrets—I no longer have the courage to live. But dance, my friends, rhumbas, fox-trots, all you like. My death can best be accompanied by the sounds of your music, your feet, and your laughter. Adieu."

And the needle scraped in a stunned silence.

Then suddenly a babel of voices arose which made the former roar seem like a mouse's squeak. Everyone had something to say, and said it to the world at large.

"It's a joke of Georgette's." "The whole thing is silly." "Why, she has every reason for being happy." "Look here, at her age girls don't kill themselves."

Then, in every mouth there arose the question, "But where is she? I haven't seen her for a quarter of an hour!"

And the inevitable decision: "Let's go find her."

The band-leader denied any knowledge of the affair. The barmen were equally ignorant. When it reached the point where the guests were asking each other, "What next?" a disturbance around the door brought new sensation. A tall, swarthy man dressed in tweeds, with long, black hair and sparkling black eyes, was being firmly repulsed by the doorman.

"I'm sorry, Monsieur, but only formal dress is allowed this evening."

"But look," in a Castilian accent, "I've got to get in."

"Have you an invitation, Monsieur?"

"Of course not, you fool! I just got in from the airport. Where would I——"

A tall, bleached blonde broke into the argument. "That's all right, Antoine. This is Señor Arado. Pedro, you old darling, where did you drop down from? What on earth are you doing in Paris? And how's the sulphur business?"

Pedro turned on her briefly. "Burned out. Where's Georgette?"

"But we don't know! There's this record, and she's gone, and we——"

"*What* record? Talk sense, can't you, woman? What's going on here, anyway?"

A few minute's explanation brought him up to date on the affair. When he had learned what little they all knew, he demanded "Have you asked Emilie?"

"Emilie? Who's Emilie?"

"Her maid. Here you!" He grabbed a passing waiter by the arm. "Find Mademoiselle Emilie, and bring her here, quickly!"

"*Tres bien*, Monsieur."

Emilie was quickly located mixing a batch of her famous "Georgette" cocktails, a potent mixture consisting of Scotch, gin, and apricot brandy in equal proportions. Somewhat flustered, she stood before the excited Spaniard.

"Why, Señor Arado, I . . . Mademoiselle Georgette will be . . . I must go find. . . ."

"Where is she?"

"Why, I don't know. Isn't she here?"

"Where have you been, woman? She's had a phonograph record played saying that she's going to kill herself, and——"

"Kill herself!" Emilie screamed. Then, with a moan, she slipped to the floor, unconscious.

"Here, some brandy, quick!"

It was brought, and in a few moments the colour came back to the maid's pale face. Her eyelids flickered a little, and she moaned, "I knew something terrible would happen! I told her that bad luck would come if she insisted."

"Insisted on what?" came the cry from fifty throats.

"On putting a coffin in her boudoir!"

"She's hysterical!" came a voice from the crowd which encircled her.

"No, I'm not! There's a coffin in her boudoir. It came from Tronchet's this afternoon. Horrible thing! Ugh! And Mademoiselle said it had to be put in her boudoir. I told her that such a thing was unheard of, but (*Continued on page 66*)

My Grandmother was keeper of the household purse, as I am. She planned the household budget, paid the wages, kept her accounts faithfully. When she saved money she kept it in her jewel box in the top bureau drawer. I use a bank and draw my money by cheque. I can make *use* of my savings in a way that my grandmother could never have done. When I want advice on financial matters I consult my bank manager. The Westminster Bank is able to offer many services beyond those of keeping money in a safe place. You should ask about some of them.

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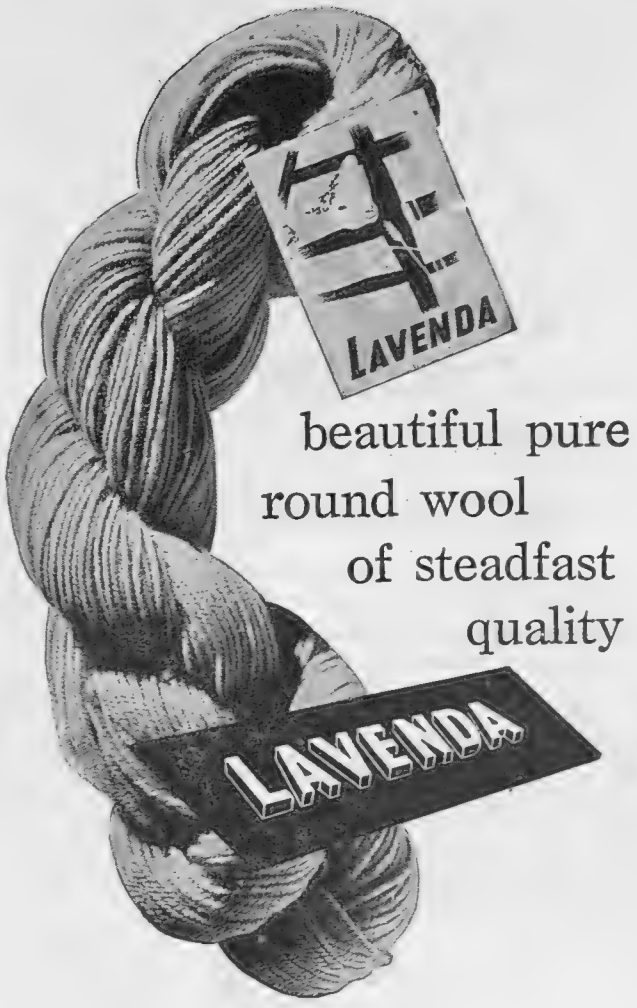

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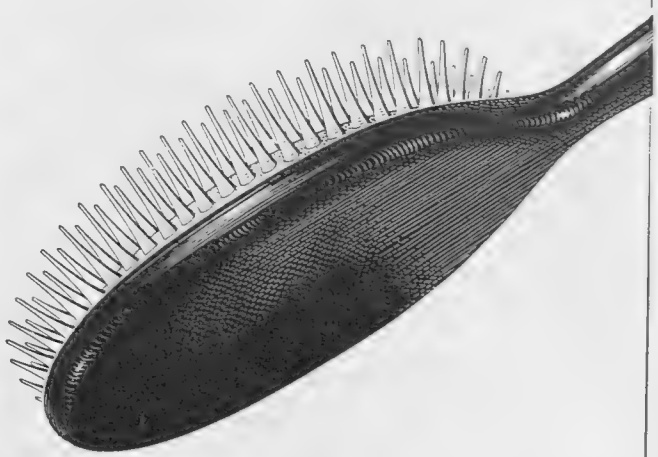

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she——" But no one was listening. In a mob, Pedro in the lead, the guests were rushing up the stairway.

There was no answer to Pedro's knocks on the door of Georgette's apartment, but a man who had killed fifty of Spain's best bulls was not to be stopped by oak panels. He threw himself against the door. The hinges groaned. Again, and wood splintered. With the third try, the door came away from the frame altogether, and Pedro hurtled into the room, and rushed across it to Georgette's boudoir.

The scene that met his eyes confirmed his worst fears. The coffin on its pedestal, the broken glass, the reek of bitter almonds, and Georgette's body inert on the floor beside the open bier. Behind him a woman screamed. Pandemonium broke loose. "Call a doctor!" "Send for the police!" "Get an ambulance!" "Don't touch the body. You never should!"

But Pedro was deaf to all this. In three giant strides he crossed to the body of Georgette, knelt beside her, and took her head in his arms. "Darling! Dearest one!" The banalities flowed from his lips and from his heart in a mixture of French, Spanish and lover's baby-talk. "Speak to me, little one. *C'est moi*, Pedro! *Perque*——"

Georgette's eyelids fluttered. Her arms crept around his neck and her lips met his in one of her famous kisses, which had been

Die With A Smile

censored from those of her films which had played in New York—censored for very obvious reasons. Pedro's fingers, running through Georgette's already-mussed hair, encountered a large bump at the base of her skull.

"But—what's this?" he demanded.

"Oh, my head! I must have hit it against the coffin as I fell when I fainted!"

"But the cyanide——?"

"I didn't get to drink it. I fainted, dearest."

"But——"

"Look! There! In the coffin!"

Going to it, Pedro looked inside, puzzled for the moment. Then a sudden movement, beneath the oval cushion in mauve crepe de chine caught his eye. Smiling, he reached quickly into Tronchet's masterpiece and withdrew by its tail a small grey mouse. Georgette screamed; for the second time that night, she saw the little animal, and for the second time that night, she fainted.

Which explains why, in the household of Señor and Señora Pedro Arado y Garcia (she was Georgette Georges, of the Theatre des Champs-Elysées), a small, grey mouse gambols in a large, gilt cage, and no cats are allowed.

END

In Search Of Glamour

(*Continued from page* 42)

table tops pick up the dust in a few hours. Heaped ash trays will soon produce a London fog in a small room and ash trays should be emptied after every game. It is not always easy to get a card table into the best light and it is well worth experimenting before your guests arrive, as a good light does save a tremendous amount of eye strain.

IF you are playing gin rummy you will discover that the larger the score card the easier it is to score. If you are lunching out and know that you are going to play cards afterwards you will have a hat and handbag problem to solve. Personally I think it is much easier to arrive without a hat as it saves the nuisance of taking off your hat and rearranging your hair after luncheon. A well mannered woman will, of course, bring her own cigarettes and does not expect her hostess to provide them. Therefore you need a fairly large cigarette case. If you are superstitious and like to sit on your handkerchief remember to put two hankies in your handbag, one for luck and one for use.

TABLE glass has been almost impossible to get during past years. I was pleasantly surprised when I found real lager and Pilsner glasses at what seemed to me a very moderate price. For £2 8s. I have acquired twelve lager glasses and for £1 12s. a dozen Pilsner glasses. Six elegantly plain glass goblets cost me £1 4s. and at the same shop in South Audley Street I found a selection of alabaster ash trays in white misty green and in a shade which I can only describe as a pale amber, for 9s. each. Incidentally, these make excellent wedding presents.

END

In My End Is My Beginning

(*Continued from page* 32)

summer-house, on that moonless night in the perfume of the roses. With a sudden cry she pushed him from her.

"O God," she gasped. "No more, no more. Death hath no further sting. Go, my lord. For me, I stay with the prince, my son, and with the Scotland that hates me. All that is left to me in this world is courage. I pray it fail me not, now nor in the days to come."

He turned, without another word, his face dark with anger and confusion, and strode away. Mary Seton could see him now, walking towards his horse, his head bowed as if in thought or in shame. Not once did he look back.

"Will you, too, go overseas, Mary?" asked the queen. "This is the hour. The rats are leaving the sinking ship. Who stays now with the queen, stays to meet dishonour, and I do think, death. Go, Mary, while there is time."

Mary Seton answered in the same words that she had used on the queen's wedding night, her voice level, her face quiet and pale. "*I* will stay with your Majesty until death parts us."

AND now the swiftly passing pageant, darkening as it ran, had brought her at last to the events of this very morning, to the last picture of all, in the great hall of this castle of Fotheringhay, in which she now sat, grey and middle-aged and still. She saw the white-aproned headsman and his assistants kneeling before the queen and asking forgiveness; she saw the gentle smile with which their plea was answered, as though they were in fact granting a boon, as indeed maybe they were. She saw the queen, her dear mistress, helped to kneel, for she was now so racked with rheumatism that she could scarce move without assistance. She saw the coif and wig removed, and the gasp of surprise with which the few people gathered there realized that the queen's own hair was ash-grey. Yet as she knelt there, her eyes closed, her pale lips moving as the priest prayed, Seton knew that never in all her life had Mary Stuart looked so beautiful. She seemed to be all spirit.

The axe had fallen, the last terrible rites were over, the body of the queen was lying, carefully tended, upon its bier. Seton, her face still pale and very cold, had made at length the Sign of the Cross, and turned away. She was remembering the last words spoken by her mistress and most dear friend, before they left the queen's bedchamber for the scaffold.

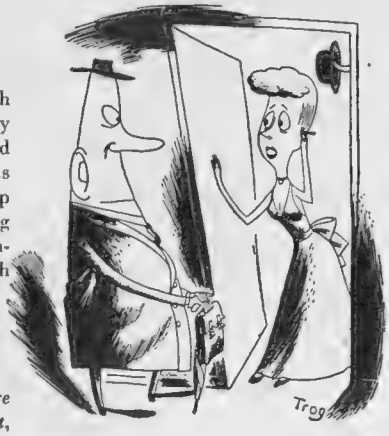
"Pray for *his* soul, my Mary, as I, too, shall pray when I am here no more. For I do most truly think that love may even cast out devils and raise the dead. Therefore I would not have you hate him. Pray for him, Mary. It may be that my love for him . . . which has not died, though I have striven often to slay it . . . shall yet preserve his soul alive."

MARY SETON left the chapel, and walked very slowly along the stone passage, a tall, slender woman, her auburn hair patched and streaked with grey, her thin, high-cheeked face almost as grey as her hair, her angular figure wrapped in a black velvet cloak, and that clutched in her two knuckled rheumatic hands. (*Continued on page* 68)

JAMAICA JO'S MORNING MAIL.....No. 1

Harassed Girl writes:

"I am having intense trouble with my Uncle Cedric who comes to my flat every time I throw a party and acts sad and morose. This dejects the other guests. Must I stop throwing parties, or start throwing my Uncle Cedric out of the window? I live on the fourteenth floor. Please advise."



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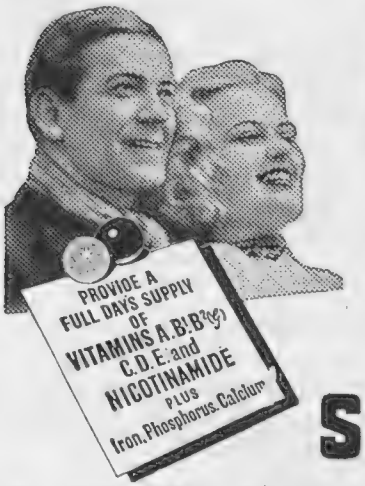

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The eyes of the sentries followed her in something that was part pity, part admiration, part awe. She went slowly in at the narrow doorway of the room that had been the queen's, let the door fall behind her with a clang, and said aloud: "I am the last, O God. Now let no more suffer for her sake, she for whom all of us were glad to suffer, save one."

The passing of the long pageant of memories, so long in the retrospect, so short in actual time, was over. She crossed herself in the silence, and spoke aloud. "Not even he, I would not that even *he* should suffer, for *she* forgave him. It may be that her love shall yet save him. So shall I pray, even as she herself prayed."

Like the soft rain in a thaw, after the icy bitterness of a black frost, tears began to trickle very quietly down her pale cheeks. But there was peace in her eyes.

END

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The title of this story is the motto on the coat of arms of Mary Queen of Scots

In My End Is My Beginning

These Winter Days (*Continued from page* 29)

and I have often watched frantic rodents race hither and thither in an attempt to frustrate a weasel, but even though they reach their homes, they are not safe, for the determined weasel respects nobody's property. Its slim body is but little bigger than a man's thumb and so intense is its blood-lust that it fears nothing and will venture almost anywhere.

The stoat is larger than the weasel and wears a black tip to its tail. It also shows an inclination to be gregarious in winter—a characteristic also noticeable among certain birds.

But how very different from the gregarious instinct of the lapwings, rooks and starlings, is robin redbreast's attitude? Highly esteemed because of its readiness to respond to human advances, the robin has no affection for its own kith and kin and no bird has a stronger sense of territorial possession. In winter each robin stakes its claim to a certain area and no other redbreast enters there except at its own peril.

But a robin's attitude to other species is usually more commendable, and in my garden there once lived a robin and a song-thrush which were great friends. Both of them would come to my hand for food and often took their breakfast together from the same dish. The song-thrush, however, was more fond of snails than of any artificial food which I could give him and it was amusing to watch him peeping, poking and peering into nooks and crannies in the hope of finding some. When successful he would carry the snail to a large stone on which to hammer the shell until it smashed. The juicy contents were then enjoyed and hunting began again. This particular stone was the thrush's favourite anvil and snails found three or fields away were brought there to be dealt with.

DURING these winter months, however, it is not only our resident birds which entertain us, but from the northern parts of the continent come the redwings and the fieldfares, while the attractive bramblings (conspicuous because of their prominent white rumps) congregate with our chaffinches, so that however cold the weather, to those who have eyes to see there is always much of interest to observe and record in winter. But when taking a stroll into the country, dress suitably. The wild open spaces can be very cold on a winter's day, so that a warm coat and a stout pair of shoes are essential. A walking-stick will be useful and if you happen to possess a pair of field-glasses, carry them with you.

END

Decorating The Cake (*Continued from page* 47)

MOCK ALMOND ICING

Ingredients: 3 oz. margarine; 3 tablespoonfuls water; 6 oz. semolina; 6 oz. sugar; almond essence to taste, about a dessertspoonful.

Put semolina, margarine and water in a pan, boil up and cook gently for 5 minutes. Add essence and sugar, mix well, simmer a few minutes, remove pan from stove. When cool enough, knead till free from cracks. Place on cake and roll gently with rolling-pin. Trim to right size and smooth round with palette knife. If coating sides of cake, roll out and cut into strips. Lightly coat sides of cake with jam to make icing stick.

GLACÉ ICING (suitable for small cakes, biscuits, etc.)

Ingredients: 8 oz. icing sugar; about ½ gill warm water or less if coffee or other essences are added.

Beat enough water or flavouring into sugar to make it like thick cream. Use at once—smooth any unevennesses with knife dipped in hot water, but touch as little as possible. In the case of chocolate boil about 3 oz. chocolate powder with about ½ a gill water, add ½ oz. margarine, cool till mixture resembles thick cream—coat cakes.

MARSHMALLOW ICING

Ingredients: 4 oz. marshmallow, or substitute as below; teaspoonful lemon essence or juice; icing sugar.

Cut marshmallows into small pieces, reserving a few for decoration. Place in double saucepan or bowl in boiling water and melt. Remove pan and add lemon and enough icing sugar to make thick cream. Coat cake and decorate with cherries and marshmallows.

HOMEMADE MARSHMALLOW

Ingredients: 1 tablespoonful gelatine; 1 cupful granulated sugar; small pinch salt; flavouring.

Heat sugar with ¼ cup water till dissolved. Add gelatine, just bring to boil and remove when nearly cool, add salt and flavouring. Beat with whisk till soft enough to pour. Well grease and dust the bottom of 1-in. deep baking tin with icing sugar, pour in mixture. When cold turn out in sugared paper. Cut and roll on icing sugar.

No Waste No Want (*Continued from page* 47)

Baste frequently.

Serve with dish of red currant jelly, and piles of chestnut purée round dish and slices of grilled banana if available.

CHESTNUT PURÉE

Ingredients: 1 lb. chestnuts; 1 pint stock; 1 oz. margarine; cochineal; seasoning.

Cut off bottoms of nuts and bake in moderate oven till shells crack. Remove shells and inner skins and simmer in stock for a good hour till tender. Drain and sieve. Add margarine, melted, seasoning, and colour pale pink. If too stiff moisten with a little milk.

ROAST PORK

This can be served with stuffing balls made from ½ lb. sausage meat, 4 oz. crumbs, 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, pinch powdered sage, and grated rind of half lemon, seasoning, and egg or milk to bind. A tin of baked beans in tomato sauce, and baked apples—baked without sugar and skins removed gently before serving.

END

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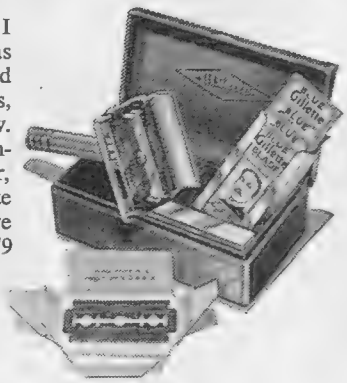

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Some Other Christmases (*Continued from page* 25)

tion. In the morning the nuns find their stockings filled with money, sweets and trinkets.

I do not think, however, that the Christmas stocking custom spread from Britain to the French and Italian convents, because you find that there is no mention of Christmas stockings in England before 1852.

Now about that white bearded gentleman whose reindeer drawn sleigh comes hurtling over the roof tops, from whence does he come?

In the beginning he was no other than Nicholas, Bishop of Myra who lived and died in the fourth century and who became the Patron Saint of Children.

Old Nick, not to be confounded with another Nick who had hoofs and a tail, came in Scandinavia to be known as Krishkinkle. In the Northern European countries and in parts of Germany Nicholas became known as Santa Klaus and hence his translation into English. His sleigh and his reindeer obviously come from the Scandinavian countries, but once we got him in Britain, we re-exported him all over the world. Father Christmas, edited in England, is to-day as American as he is British, as *Père Noël* he flourishes in France.

I presume that the Pilgrim Fathers took the British Christmas to the United States, where Christmas is celebrated as it is here, but they add one more decoration. The Americans at Christmas time hang on their front doors garlands of laurels and holly. I do not know the origin of that custom.

Now if you will step on my magic carpet, we will try and emulate Sir Philip Roc's bird and be in two places at once. You will perhaps recall that Sir Philip was an Irish Member of Parliament who said in a speech: "I'm not a bird; I can't be in two places at once." Here then you are, in Portugal, without leaving your own fireside.

Let us take as an example a farmer's family in the Alentejo province. The family foregathers in the large kitchen before the enormous fireplace which goes by the name of *lareira*. The *lareira* plays quite an important part in the Christmas festivity, as it is here that presently a whole pig will be roasted on a spit.

Now the whole family is getting busy, preparing sweetmeats, decorating the house with garlands of paper flowers and sticking a piece of fern here and there to contrast with the gay artificial colours. In the place of honour there will always be a Crib, or *presépio* as it is called in Portuguese. This feature is as important in Portugal as the tree is at an English Christmas party.

Midnight Mass in Portugal is called "*Missa do Gallo*"—the Cock's Mass—because it is at that hour that Portuguese cocks are wont to crow. At the end of the Mass, the faithful crowd around the Crib and the priest lifts out the replica of the Infant Jesus so that each member of the congregation may kiss the Child's foot. A choir boy holding a piece of silk cloth follows the priest and wipes the foot after each kiss.

Then the family return to their home and sit down to supper at a table which is literally covered with sweetmeats such as *broas*—a kind of bread made with honey—*arroz doce*, sweet rice cooked with a number of eggs which would keep an English family in 1948 happy for at least a month; *empadas*, pies of various description—*arrufadas*, belonging to the bun family, and *sonhos* (dreams) so called because they are light, sugary and hollow inside—and best of all by the Portuguese, *filhos*, very light, fluffy, crescent shaped cakes. The meat dishes include roast pork, breaded cutlets and various sausages. This feast could not start without the national soup, *caldo verde*—green broth—which is made from very finely shredded cabbage. The drinks accompanying this meal are the usual green wine, or *vinho verde*, which the Portuguese prefer to any other.

And so to bed, each member of the family having first left a shoe in the fireplace where the Infant Jesus is supposed to descend and leave his gifts.

Now over to Czechoslovakia. In the countryside the peasants always expect guests and if none come, the host goes out and looks for one. The family and the guests eat *vanocka* which consists of flour, butter, eggs, sugar, almonds and raisins made into a paste and baked in the oven. *Vanocka* is also fed to the fowls and cattle. Like in medieval England, the cattle in Czechoslovakia and the domestic animals take part in the Christmas fare.

After Christmas Eve supper, a parcel is made up of something of everything from the table. Half the contents are thrown into the nearest brook so that the water shall remain pure and clean; half is buried in the earth so that it shall be fertile. In some places, part of the contents of the parcel are thrown in the fire, so that it shall do no harm.

In Czechoslovakia there is no Father Christmas; it is the Infant Jesus who brings gifts.

The national Christmas fare is carp and goose. Christmas Eve (called "Evening of Abundance") all work ceases at five p.m.; traffic stops. The evening meal consists of soup followed by dishes of stewed and fried carp. Presents are taken to the animals.

Before the festival the women prepare nuts wrapped in gold and silver paper. The nut shells are made into little boats which are floated on the "sea of life"—a bowl of water; if they progress far before they sink, the owner will live long.

I find the legend and the lore of Christmas, the mingling of the customs of one country with another, to be a most fascinating subject. It is one, perhaps the only one in the world, which does really make the whole world kin. Whether rosebuds replace holly or boiled beef the roast turkey, it matters not. Stockings hung at the foot of the bed or shoes in the fireplace, it is all the same. The Christmas spirit is cosmopolitan. It is the spirit of Goodness in a bleak world, and that is all that matters.

END

Fast-To-Knit Bed-jacket (*Continued from page* 36)

When work measures 4 ins. from the cast-on edge, dec. 1 st. on the next and every 6th armhole edge following until 39 sts. remain. Continue on these 39 sts. until work measures 14 ins. from the cast-on edge.

SHAPE ARMHOLE

Cast off 3 sts. at the beg. of the next 3 armhole end rows. Continue on these 30 sts. until armhole measures 5 ins.

Change to the following patt. for yoke. Work in rib of k. 1, p. 1. Work 5 rows.

SHAPE FOR NECK AND YOKE

Cast off 8 sts. at the beg. of the next neck edge row, dec. 1 st. at the beg. of every neck edge row until 15 sts. remain and armhole measures 7½ ins.

SHAPE SHOULDER

Cast off 5 sts. at the beg. of the next 3 armhole end rows.

LEFT FRONT

Work as for the right front with shapings at the opposite edges.

SLEEVES

With No. 2 needles cast on 54 sts. Work 2 rows garter st. Work in patt. for 4 ins., then dec. 1 st. each end of every 6th row until 48 sts. remain; continue on these sts. until work measures 18 ins. from the cast-on edge.

SHAPE ARMHOLE

Cast off 3 sts. at the beg. of the next 2 rows. Then dec. 1 st. each end of every alternate row until 21 sts. remain. Then dec. 1 st. at the beg. and end of every row until 13 sts. remain. Cast off.

COLLAR

With No. 2 needles, cast on 58 sts. Work 2½ ins. k. 1, p. 1, rib. Cast off.

TO MAKE UP

Press all parts with a warm iron and damp cloth on the wrong side. Sew up side shoulder and sleeve seams. Sew in sleeves. Work a row of double crochet all round the jacket and sleeve edges. Bind with ribbon. Sew on collar. Sew on ribbon for bow. Work row of double crochet round the edge of collar. Press all seams.

END

Small Size Cable Cardigan (*Continued from page* 36)

SHAPE SHOULDERS

Cast off 11 on next 6 rows. Leave remainder on safety-pin for back neck.

THE RIGHT FRONT

With No. 9 needles cast on 66 sts. Rib 4 rows. Now rib 8 and put them on safety-pin for buttonhole band. Change to patt. on remaining 58, dec. 1 st. at end of 9th row and at same edge on every 4th row until 50 remain. Work 3 rows after last dec. Change to No. 12 needles and work 8 rows in rib. Change back to No. 9 needles and patt. inc. 1 st. at end of 9th row and on every 8th row following, 9 times in all (59). When 9½ ins. from top of waist ribbing, *Shape Armhole*: Cast off 3 on next 4 p. rows and dec. 1 st. at same edge on next p. row (46).

Continue until 13½ ins. on the straight from top of waist ribbing.

SHAPE NECK

Cast off 6 on next row beg. at neck edge; dec. 1 st. at same edge on next 4 rows, then next 3 alternate rows (33). Work straight until 1 in. longer than back, then shape shoulder: Cast off 11 on next 3 alternate rows at armhole edge.

Work the left front to match, with all shaping at opposite edges.

THE SLEEVES

With No. 12 needles cast on 58 sts. Rib 4 rows. Change to patt., using same needles, until 3 ins. from start, then change to No. 9 needles and continue in patt., inc. 1 st. at both ends of every 8th row until 78 are on needle, then every 4th row until 98 are on needle. When side edge is 18½ ins., or length desired, *Shape Top*: Dec. 1 st. at both ends of every alternate row until 62 remain, then every row until 18 remain. Cast off.

TO MAKE UP

Join the shoulders and press seams. With No. 12 needles pick up 8 from right front safety-pin. Rib, making buttonholes on 9th row from cast-on edge and on every 22nd row afterwards, thus: Rib 3, cast off 2, rib to end, and on next row cast on 2 over gap. Work 18 rows after 6th buttonhole. Replace sts. on safety-pin and sew this strip to right front edge, stretching it so that safety-pinned sts. are level with the cast-off 6 at neck. Pick up 8 from left front and rib a strip of the same length; sew this, stretched, up left front edge. Now go back to the right front; rib the 8 from safety-pin, pick up and rib the cast-off 6 sts. neck; 26 round neck edge to shoulder seam, 32 from back neck, 26 round left neck edge and 8 from button band: that was the 19th row from last buttonhole. Rib 3 more rows. Make buttonhole, as before, on next row; rib 3 more rows and cast off. Sew in sleeves, fullness at top. Join side and sleeve seams. Press seams. Sew on buttons to match buttonholes.

END

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Books (*Continued from page 41*)

when revolution swept the country. Just the right colourful story for the Christmas fireside, with this added merit: it is about real people, including Goethe, who comes into the narrative.

MISS ELIZABETH D'OYLEY goes farther back into history for her novel "**Even as the Sun**" (Michael Joseph, 9s. 6d.), a study of Henry IV as chivalrous hero and patriot, up to the time of his coronation. The tale of his adventures after his marriage at fourteen is unfolded against a vivid fourteenth-century tapestry of knights and ladies, and with a sympathy that discounts his darker reputation, especially with regard to Richard II's death.

ANOTHER historical—Dr. Alfred Leland Crabb's "**Lodging at the Saint Cloud**" (National Press, 10s. 6d.)—is a spy drama of occupied Nashville in the American Civil War. The author bounces through the narrative without troubling much about style, of which "They could hear distant roosters trumpeting the advent of dawn" and "Blue streamers of wood smoke began to lift in twisting random curls above kitchen chimneys" are typical. He "had a great time writing it," says the jacket note. It certainly has plenty of action.

MODERN China—the sinister side of it—is the background to Mr. James Norman's thriller "**The Night-walkers**" (Michael Joseph, 8s. 6d.) concerning the exploits of a young archaeologist who suffers from amnesia, and the mystery of some T'ang bronzes buried in a monastery garden. The author of *Murder Chop Chop* knows all the tricks of gangster intrigue, and in this one holds the suspense in a sure grip.

WHEN a fishing village develops into a holiday resort and two brothers in a fisher family stick stubbornly to the old craft while a third, aided by his sister, exploits the new layout and goes in for land deals there is bound to be drama and conflict with repercussions even on a love idyll. Miss Ruth Moore's village in "**Spoonhandle**" (Rich & Cowan, 10s. 6d.) is off the coast of Maine, but its story has a universal application nearer home. Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith told a comparable one about Sussex in *Tamarisk Town;* and both share a strong human interest.

SENT to sea as cabin boy at the behest of scoundrels; high-jacking, mutiny, terrifying thrills in a slave-ship in the 1820s . . . yes, Mr. Norman Collins steps up the blood-beats of the eternal boy in "**Black Ivory**" (Collins, 9s. 6d), with stirring pictures to boot. The jacket doesn't say he "had a great time writing it," but I'm sure he did. Gusto? Laddie, it's terrific. . . .

MOST of us know a drunkard; some of us have to cope with one, to our sorrow. Miss Natalie Anderson Scott tells the case-history of one in "**The Story of Mrs. Murphy**" (MacDonald, 12s. 6d.), a raw, sub-world tale of Jimmy Murphy at work and play, in love with the girls who try to save him, in hospital, in the gutter, and finally, on his death-bed, mumbling: "Run downstairs and bring me a bottle of beer." The style is stark, filmic, in the modern U.S. manner, with stabs of emotion, pathos, sheer tragedy. A forceful study ruthlessly presented.

SLICK and exciting in its suspense is Miss Hilda Lawrence's story of a murder at a party in a New York hostel for working girls: "**Death of a Doll**" (Chapman & Hall, 9s. 6d.) with Mark East again as the detective assigned to solve it and the quaint spinsters, Bessy and Beulah, for light relief. Background and the work-girl characters are expertly done.

MR. GRAHAM SUTTON'S wilds are the Lakeland fells which he describes lovingly in "**Fell Days**" (Museum Press, 12s. 6d.), a collection of essays and stories about climbs, old shepherds, Keswick and other worthies, John Peel's country, and other lake lore—things the tourist should know but rarely does.

MR. G. S. FRASER interprets agreeably both the tame and the wild in "**Vision of Scotland**" (Elek, 25s.), a handsome quarto with 168 striking photographs, drawings in colour and line by Barbara Jones, and maps; excellent both as guide and souvenir.

FOR postscript—since we actually *eat* at Christmas—Mr. Wilson Midgley's aid to the needy: "**Cookery for Men Only**" (Chaterson, 7s. 6d.). You go to the larder, sir, and whatever you find there—if only a scrap of bread or potato—he tells you the simple (or ingenious) things you can do with it. Whatever else you lack, keep *him* in your larder and you won't starve. The jacket shows a carrot being sliced with *scissors* . . . A compassionate present for lonely men?

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OTHER books recommended to readers include:

MISCELLANEOUS

"**Last Viceroy,**" by Ray Murphy (Jarrolds, 21s.), an authentic autobiographical study of the career of Earl Mountbatten, observed against the great historical events in which he played so significant a part. "**Enough, No More,**" the remarkable autobiography of Ingeborg Wells, the beautiful actress who lived for ten years under the Nazi and Russian regimes in Berlin, translated by Lord Sudley (Herbert Joseph, 15s.) Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* and Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* are the first two titles in Macdonald's new series of illustrated classics (8s. 6d. each), beautifully bound and specially jacketed in attractive long-life cellulose acetate wrappers. "**Samplers and Stitches,**" fourth revised edition—by Mrs. Archibald Christie (Batsford, 18s.); "**Best One-Act Plays of 1946-47;**" selected by J. W. Marriott (Harrap, 8s. 6d.); "**Behold Your King,**" by Florence Marvyne Bauer (National Press 12s. 6d.); "**Tramp Royal,**" by Ryan MacMahon (Langdon, 10s. 6d.); a new edition of Henry Williamson's *The Star Born,* illustrated by Mildred Eldridge (Faber, 12s. 6d.); and two additions to the Faber Gallery art books (7s. 6d. each), "**Homage to Venus,**" by James Laver and "**Renoir**" by R. H. Wilenski.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

There are some excellent illustrated children's books this year. Here are some titles among the best books suitable for children of all ages. "**BB's Fairy Book Meeting Hill**" is a wonderful collection of fairy tales, some new and some traditional, beautifully illustrated in colour by D. J. Watkins-Pitchford (Hollis and Carter, 15s.); "**Best Children's Stories of the Year,**" edited by Leonard Gribble (Burke, 7s. 6d.); "**The Adventures of Sockeye the Salmon,**" by Noel Monks, illustrated by H. G. Polaine (Oliver Moxon, 7s. 6d.); "**The Three Tregunters,**" by Mary Campbell illustrated by Mary Shillabeer (Museum Press, 5s.); "**Once in a Blue Moon,**" by Margaret Gibbs, illustrated by C. L. Doughty (Hollis and Carter, 6s.); "**Poppel and the Runaways,**" by Fanny Dickens, pictures by Joan Milroy (Hollis and Carter, 3s. 6d.); "**Timmy and Roger,**" by Rosalind Vallance with drawings by Ruth Gervis and Jetta Vise (Harrap, 5s.); "**Pedler's Progress,**" by B. M. H. Goddard (Harrap, 7s. 6d.); "**Winkie Wee and the Silver Sixpences**" and "**Winkie Wee's Spring Cleaning,**" by Christine Chaundler (Museum Press, 2s. 6d. each); "**Rusty, the Little Red Dachshund,**" written by Dorothy K. L'Hommedieu, illustrated by Marguerite Kirmse (Hale, 7s. 6d.); "**Five Golden Wrens,**" by Hugh Troy (Hale, 7s. 6d.); "**A B C and All That,**" written and illustrated by Gladys M. Rees (Hale, 6s.); "**The Merry Folk of Flowerdale,**" by Dorothy Richards, illustrated by Elsie Thomas (Faber, 6s.); "**Songs on the Wind,**" by Eileen A. Soper (Museum Press, 7s. 6d.); "**The Story of Puffing Billy the Steamroller,**" by Leonard Wayman (Golden Galley Press, 10s. 6d.); "**The Mighty Hunter,**" by Berta and Elmer Hader (Hale, 5s.); "**The Ring of Fortune,**" by Margaret Priestley, illustrated by Philip Hepworth (Faber and Faber, 8s. 6d.). Two well illustrated volumes from Max Parrish are "**Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,**" by Lewis Carroll with the original illustrations by Sir John Tenniel in black and white, and sixteen figures and scenes built up by Hugh Gee, photographed and reproduced in colour (9s. 6d.); and "**The Amazing Pranks of Master Till Eulenspiegel**" (8s. 6d.) with sixteen scenes made up from models, reproduced in full colour and forty-one drawings in black and white by Elias Katzer.

"**The Secret of the Harvest Camp**" by Agnes Booth (Faber, 8s. 6d.) for the 10-14-year-olds; and "**One Man Wallopem to the Rescue**" by Margaret Gibbs (Hollis and Carter, 7s. 6d.) and "**The Dryad and the Toad**" by Francis Dale (Macdonald, 7s. 6d.) both well illustrated books for the youngsters.

The **Cynthia Asquith Book** (Macdonald & Co., 10s. 6d.), "**The Modern Encyclopaedia for Children,**" an excellent alphabetical reference book, well illustrated and written in simple language for children (Odhams, 10s. 6d.); "**The Children's Wonder Book in Colour,**" (Odhams, 10s. 6d.); "**Mr. Bumbletoes of Bimbleton**" by L. Curtis Ockenden, illustrated by Maben (Odhams, 7s. 6d.); "**Sam Pig in Trouble,**" by Alison Uttley (Faber, 7s. 6d.); "**The Stolen Jewels,**" by Virginia Pye, illustrated by Richard Kennedy (Faber, 8s. 6d.); "**Bow-net and Water Lilies,**" by Mathena Blomefield, with illustrations by Mildred Eldridge (Faber, 8s. 6d.); "**Miss Kelly,**" by Elizabeth S. Holding, illustrated by Margaret Johnson (Michael Joseph, 7s. 6d.).

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